

Illuminating Shakespeare Through Performance 1997-2008

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Declaration of Academic Integrity

I, Jocelyn Mary Boxall, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others this is always clearly stated.

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Date

Abstract.

The twenty-first century has seen a marked change in approaches to understanding Shakespeare's texts through literary and theatrical criticism and also performance. This thesis argues that performances of Shakespeare in Britain between 1997 and 2008 staged by Shakespeare's Globe, the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company enabled audiences to have increased physical and intellectual access to the plays and that as a result literary and theatrical critical readings of the texts became more productively complicated. It is argued that this increased access came as a response to political initiatives to democratise culture in Britain. It was also partly the result of transferring staging practices used in more intimate theatrical spaces to main house environments where they were developed further. By analysing particular scenes from *Titus Andronicus*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *King Henry V* and *King Lear* in case studies of the plays observed in the theatrical spaces and conditions in which they were encountered in performance, it is possible to demonstrate that production practices during this time gave new dimensions to the plays and deepened our understanding of their processes and textual meanings. The identification of these processes and their uses extends our knowledge of Shakespeare's work as a dramatist. Discussion of the plays is enriched through a combined consideration of (a) the methods used to analyse the difficulties emerging from their staged performance, and (b) the problems identified by literary and theatrical accounts of the texts. These difficulties and problems include apparent structural inconsistencies in the texts, the purposes of character interaction and the diverse nature of audience reception in the particular spatial and temporal conditions

in which the plays are encountered. It is argued that by conducting a multi-perspectival analytical approach and recognising the subsequent beneficial complications more detail about Shakespeare's meaning-making processes can be revealed.

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Chapter One.

Introduction.

The potential for interdisciplinary analysis to illuminate the dramaturgy of Shakespeare's plays was already being debated in the final decade of the twentieth century. As Robert Weimann observes:

The recent interest in a new model of Shakespeare criticism raises a host of practical and theoretical questions, among which the relationship between the representation of textual 'meaning' and the circumstances of performing practice appears to be quite central.¹

These questions coincided with particular political conditions in Britain at that time. The decline of Conservative power, which began in 1990² and continued until New Labour's landslide victory in May 1997, had far-reaching consequences for political, cultural, social and economic life in Britain. When Tony Blair became Prime Minister he developed a premier-style leadership for the new millennium. Blairite approaches to government included the advancement of egalitarian policies of inclusion. These policies affected not only the ideologies and practices of the main theatrical institutions³ where Shakespeare performance was encountered by its audience, but also the ways in which the meanings of plays were communicated, considered and evaluated inside and outside the playhouse.

¹ Robert Weimann, 'Performing at the Frontiers of Representation: Epilogue and Post-Scriptural Future in Shakespeare's Plays', in *The Arts of Performance in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Drama, Essays for George Hunter*, ed. by Murray Biggs, Philip Edwards, Inga-Stina Ewbank and Eugene M. Waith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), pp. 96-129 (p. 96).

² Margaret Thatcher served as Conservative Prime Minister from 4 May 1979 until 28 November 1990. She was succeeded by John Major, whose leadership was contested in 1995. He remained in office until 19 June 1997.

³ The political, cultural and economic timeframe under discussion marked the transition from a thirteen year period of Conservative government, which had observed a rise in high quality, small-scale production for a limited and relatively wealthy audience, to just over a decade of New Labour in power which transformed larger theatrical institutions using a mixed economic policy to stimulate fiscal growth through tourist revenue and devolved subsidy away from London to reinvigorate regional theatres. A more detailed discussion of these policies is provided later in Chapter One on p. 15.

The focus of this study is an analysis of what happened to Shakespearean production in New Labour Britain between 1997 and 2008. It investigates whether the dramaturgic processes presented in a range of Shakespeare's plays performed during this period can be illuminated in further detail as a result of ideological and institutional change that affected theatre practice. In order to explore this question, selected scenes from performances of two different productions of four plays, *Titus Andronicus*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *King Henry V* and *King Lear*, staged by the main institutional providers of Shakespeare's work in Britain are compared in separate case studies. The original contribution of the research lies in the development and application of a methodology to investigate the plays which draws on different aspects of literary and theatrical critical accounts of the texts, pre-production work, performance and spectatorship and reflects on the political and institutional climate in which the plays were staged in order to identify the productive problems that emerge. The aim of the case studies is to demonstrate the benefits of an investigative method which integrates each of these analytical approaches more closely for the purpose of exploring the links between the audience and the processes by which it makes meaning out of its encounter with the plays in the contexts and conditions of performance. The plays considered here span Shakespeare's work as a playwright during the 1590s and early 1600s. Each text offers identifiable approaches to the uses of the playhouse space and audience interaction which provide a useful basis for comparison. Shared thematic links between texts include broken relationships and the imbalance of power in patriarchal hierarchies. They offer commentaries on the effects of political power on the individual which was a key focus of Blair's government. *King Henry V* and *King Lear* are well-known, popular plays. *Titus*

Andronicus and *Love's Labour's Lost* have been produced less often, partly because they offer particular challenges to modern directors and audiences in terms of staging and reception, but both plays were performed relatively frequently during this period. The discussion of the texts is therefore shaped by these factors to demonstrate how elements of the plays' dramaturgic features were developed over time. The research presented here is aimed at all readers of Shakespeare's texts, whether they are considering the plays from literary or theatrical critical perspectives in order to learn more about Shakespeare's dramaturgy, whether they are reading the text for meaning in performance or, preferably, exercising a combination of these analytical methods.

Theatrical performance combines spontaneity with meticulous preparation. Its strength lies in its transience. Practitioners and audiences make a mutual commitment to sharing responsibility for creating the performance in the playhouse; a power which is constantly re-negotiated and remains unstable. Much of the impact of theatrical practice is linked with specific moments in performance which are custom-built for very particular temporal and spatial conditions and destined to vanish as the production concludes. Ironically, the impact of performance is the very aspect which extends the life of the text through the demand for repeated production. Analysis of the construction of dramatic episodes within scenes in performance is of interest to the overall discussions of the plays because they are often the moments which create literary or theatrical debate over time. Sourcing information about them remains difficult, especially if they are being considered from multiple perspectives. The continuing existence of comprehensive production meeting and rehearsal notes, detailed prompt books and show reports after performance in theatre archives or online is relatively rare. These artefacts require interpretive skill in order to consider

the information they offer alongside theatrical or literary accounts of the text. A working knowledge of the theatrical institutions and practices during a particular historical period is useful. As the bibliography for this thesis indicates⁴, the researcher contemplating the combined effects of performance practice seeks evidence from a wide variety of sources, including the experience of multiple performances attended over time. Accounts by directors and actors of their work on specific productions have been included as and when appropriate; they yield valuable information about some of the processes involved in creating meaning in performance.⁵ These sources of evidence inevitably refer the researcher back to the original Shakespeare text, enabling the platforms between the text and performance to be established for discussion.

The written texts of Shakespeare's plays offer blueprints for the experiences of performance; their dramatic structures and characterisations are the processes which provide the routes for making meaning as the play unfolds moment by moment. The literary critical approaches of New Historicism, Cultural Materialism and, more recently, Presentism have increasingly invited investigation of the relationship between the play texts and the temporal and spatial conditions in which they are encountered. The work of Terence Hawkes and Ewan Fernie, which has been informed to some extent by left-wing literary critics such as Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield whose materialist approaches to Shakespeare reflect the desire for

⁴ The bibliography includes performance and archive materials as primary sources in addition to citations for political, institutional and practitioner comment from a range of sources. The aim is to highlight the significance of intrinsic and extrinsic contexts and the experience of performance in the evaluation process.

⁵ It should be noted that in the early stages of the research interviews with audience members offered fewer relevant comments for analysis and are therefore referred to only if they add information about the topics under discussion. Audience surveys completed by theatres are of interest but tend to offer less than comprehensive indications of reality in terms of providing information about demographic and response. Other types of study may find audience surveys of greater value.

political change, has shaped the development of the methodology. The critical approaches of theatre history and performance studies have clarified the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic conditions on the plays in performance, including the spaces in which they are staged, the nature of the audience and the spectators' role in playmaking. The value of the research documented here lies in discussing the spatial relationships between the audience and the events on the stage, demonstrating how the practices employed to achieve them were developed in the working environment. The problems that emerge can be related to evidence from the text in order to consider them in a multi-perspectival approach.

It is not possible to gain an entirely holistic view of the production methods used in the time scale considered in this study. Neither is it feasible to conduct an investigation of every theatrical space in Britain between 1997 and 2008 staging productions of the plays. Thus I have elected to narrow the focus in order to facilitate a detailed examination of performance in spaces that responded to each other in terms of artistic, ideological and institutional development. The size and playing conditions of the auditoria are of particular interest; the bigger the auditorium the greater the difficulty in attracting and involving an audience. The selection of productions and performances here is limited but also enhanced by factors such as a) their presentation as part of a season or cycle of plays, b) their location in institutions which have the facilities and funding to produce them for a larger audience, c) the relative proximity of the performance dates which have enabled comparison of them for the particular methodological purposes of this analysis and d) their availability

for multiple viewings by the researcher.⁶ The study further considers the ideologies and practices of three key providers of Shakespeare performance in Britain: the Royal National Theatre and Shakespeare's Globe in London and the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon. These partially publicly subsidised and commercial institutions, particularly Shakespeare's Globe, have shown demonstrable interest in academic scholarship; not only in what can be learned about Shakespeare's plays from staged productions but also in what can be applied, tested and investigated in the conditions of performance. They are therefore closely linked with intrinsic and extrinsic contextual factors which affected how productions were staged between 1997 and 2008, such as changes in public funding or developments in Shakespeare research, and provide rich material for comparison.

The first part of the introduction outlines selected, relevant political changes taking place in Britain during the period 1997-2008 in more detail; primarily the transition of government from Conservative to New Labour in 1997. The impact of these changes on domestic and foreign policy is considered and the subsequent effects of them on the theatrical landscape are discussed. The second part of the introduction considers developments in literary and theatrical critical approaches to Shakespeare prior to and during this period, showing how they inform the research. Chapter Two discusses the methodology developed for this study and the rationale for the choices of productions and scenes for the case studies in further depth. Chapter Three sets the spatial, institutional and critical scene for the investigation. These topics provide relevant background for considering the processes of the first three case studies which constitute chapters Four, Five and Six in which aspects of

⁶ Twenty five live performances, including those of the productions discussed and others which facilitated reflection on the topics considered, were researched in the preparation of this thesis.

selected scenes from performance of two different productions of *Titus Andronicus*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *King Henry V* are compared respectively. The case study of *King Lear* developed in Chapter Seven draws together the research in the preceding studies and follows a similar pattern of analysis to test the methodology. The summary of the research and its outcome provides the content of Chapter Eight which concludes the study.

The performances discussed here took place in a society under a New Labour government which promised a new political dawn; a renaissance that included wider access to the arts for all. In 1997 New Labour's pre-election statement set out its cultural and economic agenda: 'The arts, culture and sport are central to the task of recreating the sense of community, identity and civic pride that should define our country [...]. Art, sport and leisure are vital to our quality of life and the renewal of our economy. They are significant earners for Britain [...].'⁷ This signalled Blair's political intention of using the arts to re-establish a sense of social inclusion and develop an existing global market in order to attract tourist revenue. It therefore emphasised a role for artistic endeavour that was politically compliant and economically productive. As New Labour took office, Chris Smith, the new Minister for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, outlined the government's aim of 'bringing democracy to culture'⁸ by describing the ideology of his recently renamed department:

The key themes are *access*, *excellence*, *education* and *economic value*. Access, in ensuring that the greatest number of people have the opportunity to experience work of quality. Excellence, in ensuring that governmental support is used to underpin the best, and the most

⁷ Tony Blair, 'Arts and Culture', in *New Labour Because Britain Deserves Better* <<http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1997/1997-labour-manifesto.shtml>> [accessed 3 June 2012] (paras. 1 and 2 of 3) (Print).

⁸ Chris Smith, *Creative Britain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), p. 2.

innovative, and the things that would not otherwise find a voice. Education, in ensuring that creativity is not extinguished by the formal education system and beyond. And economic value, in ensuring that the full economic and employment impact of the whole range of creative industries is acknowledged and assisted by government.⁹

He also argued that the arts ‘fire the imagination and inspire the intelligence; there can be no artificial barriers erected to prevent or discourage access to those experiences.’¹⁰ In this the new government adhered in part to what Alan Sinfield describes as ‘*culturism*’¹¹ in the second edition of *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism* (1994). He defines culturism as:

the belief that a wider distribution of high culture through society is desirable and that it is to be secured through public expenditure. Culturism is an aspect of the theory of welfare capitalism, within which the market is accepted as the necessary agency for the production of wealth, and its tendency to produce unacceptable inequality is to be tempered by State intervention.¹²

Sinfield, however, suggests that for the Royal Shakespeare Company in the mid-1990s ‘the outcome of culturism is unsurprising: the subsidised product has been appreciated and used overwhelmingly by middle-class audiences’.¹³ Whether this situation changed is part of this investigation into what happened to the globalised audience demographic in the subsequent decade. The encouragement of a competitive commercial sector, for example, evidenced by the development of theatrical spaces such as Shakespeare’s Globe which opened on Bankside downriver from the Royal National Theatre in 1997, was part of extending the reach of the arts

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹¹ Alan Sinfield, ‘Royal Shakespeare: Theatre and the Making of Ideology’, in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 182-203 (p. 188).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

in Britain towards an international audience. The ideological approaches of the institutions considered for this study suggest that attempts were made to break down class barriers through the provision of specific spatial conditions for performance.¹⁴ In real terms, budgets for subsidised theatres in London diminished as national demand increased, notably after May 2000 when the recommendations of the Boyden Report¹⁵ to devolve public subsidy for the performing arts towards regional theatres were addressed.¹⁶ The regional focus on funding enabled the institutional ideology of the Royal Shakespeare Company to develop after a difficult period of transition, during which it moved its base away from London and returned to Stratford, and began to compete with other regional theatres for audiences. As a result of redistributed public funding and limited sponsorship, producers in London faced with dwindling budgets were encouraged to find simpler forms of production that addressed a broader audience demographic more directly. As Dennis Kennedy suggests of visitors to the recently opened Shakespeare's Globe¹⁷, which offered Shakespearean production based on original practices, spectators became more fully engaged in 'ludic complicity'¹⁸. Less familiar texts were revisited to become part of seasons of plays performed by ensemble casts designed to build audiences over time.

¹⁴ The analyses of developments in theatre architecture in Chapter Three and of Lucy Bailey's production of *Titus Andronicus* for Shakespeare's Globe in Chapter Four exemplify this idea.

¹⁵ Boyden Associates, *Arts Council of England Roles and Functions of the English Regional Producing Theatres, May 2000*, (Bristol: Peter Boyden Associates, 2000), pp. 1-58.

¹⁶ *The Arts Council of England's National Policy for Theatre in England, July 2000* set out eight key priorities in relation to the development of subsidised theatrical institutions. Its expectations were made clear under the following headings: '1 A better range of high quality work, 2 Attract more people, 3 Develop new ways of working, 4 Education, 5 Address diversity and inclusion, 6 Develop the artists and creative managers of the future, 7 An international reputation, [and] 8 Regional distinctiveness' (*The Arts Council of England's National Policy for Theatre in England July 2000*, Section 4

< <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/300.pdf> >

[accessed 8 August 2013], pp. 1-7 (pp. 4-6)). The detail of these priorities is given in Appendix A, pp. 301-303.

¹⁷ H M Queen Elizabeth II opened Shakespeare's Globe on 12 June 1997.

¹⁸ Dennis Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle: Audiences in Modernity and Postmodernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 95.

Leading actors such as David Tennant, who had a classical training but had established a younger mainstream following through roles such as Dr Who in public service broadcasting¹⁹, could be cross-cast by the Royal Shakespeare Company to play major parts such as Hamlet and also leading characters in less-performed plays such as *Love's Labour's Lost*; in Tennant's case Berowne. In these ways, therefore, Shakespearean production began to reflect political and institutional ideology. In the wider political arena at home during the period under discussion, the government's aim of disrupting existing political hierarchies was already established as the devolution of power to Scotland and Wales began and the peace process in Northern Ireland was formalised through the Good Friday Agreement in April 1998. Political power was being decentralised. Almost simultaneously, the status and attitudes of the monarch as head of state were scrutinized through wide public access to mediated representations of royal divorce, including a controversial interview with the Princess of Wales on British television about her marriage to the heir to the throne and media coverage of her death in August 1997. These events, which Blair could not have foreseen, were followed by the deaths of Princess Margaret and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, signalling shifts in the hierarchical structure of the royal family at the close of the post-war era. The infrastructure of the monarchical hierarchy was also challenged by political moves to establish an elected House of Lords.

The global political landscape provided unexpectedly expensive and traumatic war instead of peace and prosperity. Britain was drawn into international conflict through involvement in the Balkans and through Blair's support of US foreign policy as a result of 9/11. In particular Britain was confronted with the

¹⁹ Tennant played Dr Who for the BBC between April 2005 and 2010 in episodes and accompanying spin-offs, including *Comic Relief* in 2007. In doing so he became a household name.

repercussions of its colonial past in the Middle East. By 2003, as Nicholas Hytner produced *Henry V* for his inaugural production as Artistic Director of the Royal National Theatre, Blair was increasingly criticised at home for his engagement with George Bush's administration and his handling of British involvement in Iraq.²⁰ International condemnation of Western attitudes towards asserting control in the Middle East and widespread challenges to existing democracies followed, including the London bombings of 7/7 in 2005 by terrorist cells linked with Al-Qaeda. Blair departed from the British political scene in 2007. The global collapse of the international banking system which underpinned economic infrastructures across the world took place and the New Labour government under Gordon Brown was eclipsed by a Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition in 2010. These events provided contextual material for producers of Shakespeare that is relevant to the themes and ideas expressed in the plays selected for the case studies. Since the end of Blair's premiership the British government has revisited its war record at the Chilcot

²⁰ Michael Cockerell's BBC 2 documentary on Tony Blair's time in office provides first-hand accounts of events and reactions by leading international and British political figures and others at the time. (*Blair: The Inside Story, Episode 2: A Man With A Mission*, prod. by Adam Grimley and Diana Martin. Broadcast 27 February 2007 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbV1LJcoMwg>> [accessed 27 July 2013] (Video). The relevant section is 29:00-59:00.) By 2011 the US President Barack Obama was announcing that the US was downsizing its military presence in Afghanistan. (Barack Obama, 'Speech on Withdrawal from Afghanistan', 22 June 2011 < <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/23/barack-obama-afghanistan-withdrawal-text> > [accessed 27 July 2013] (Print and video)).

Inquiry²¹ in order to reflect on its actions during this period. In a similar manner the research in this thesis revisits the record of theatrical production by Britain's main providers of Shakespeare's plays during New Labour's term of office.

Literary and theatrical critical perspectives on Shakespeare's plays reflect political, socio-economic and cultural shifts taking place at this time. Terence Hawkes argues in 2002 that political change has affected literary critical approaches to analysing Shakespeare:

The commitment to parliaments or assemblies in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland made in 1997, and realised in 1999, ranks as one of the major constitutional changes of our present [... It] requires that the 'Great Britain' project, chronicled and championed repeatedly in the Shakespearean canon, must henceforth be seen, not just as the opening of a new and apparently permanent world order, but as the beginning of an enterprise that, after four hundred years, has now reached its conclusion [...] This cannot help but generate intricate realignments of our responses to a number of Shakespeare's plays.²²

The continuing influence of left-wing politics on readings of Shakespeare is underlined here as a route of research, as is the concern with the detail of response to the texts investigated in the following case studies. Hawkes goes on to comment: 'That the texts can never be read after 1999 in quite the same way that they could be read before that date, that their "meaning", now thoroughly suffused with different levels and intensities of irony, seems to change before our eyes, offers a fine example of how the present helps to mould the past.'²³ Analysis of performance located in the

²¹ Evidence from the Chilcot Inquiry can be accessed at <<http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk>> [accessed 27 July 2013]. The evidence of Rt. Hon Clare Short MP, International Development Secretary, 2001-2003 on 10 February 2010 (<<http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/transcripts/oralevidence-bydate/100202.aspx>> [accessed 4 August 2013]), and Rt Hon The Lord Jay of Ewelme GCMG, Permanent Under Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, June 2002 to 2006 on 30 June 2010 (<<http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/transcripts/oralevidence-bydate/100630.aspx>> [accessed 4 August 2013]) provides some exemplification of the political difficulties emerging in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq.

²² Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 4.

²³ *Ibid.*

recent past which considers it alongside political change therefore supports the critical movement towards discovering more detail about how, and for what dramatic and thematic purposes, Shakespeare's plays are constructed. For example, the comparative discussion included in this study of productions of *King Lear*, a play that opens with the division of a united kingdom and considers the moral, spiritual and political aftermath of this event over a period during which such a division actually took place, enables readings that reflect the insecure political climate of the period. That is not to say that productions necessarily refer to the events of political change directly, but rather that they are imbricated by them. Contemporaneous plays, such as David Hare's documentary drama *Stuff Happens*²⁴ about the decision to invade Iraq which was staged at the Royal National Theatre in 2004, films such as Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*²⁵ and the WikiLeaks investigations into US foreign policy²⁶ further indicate the kinds of struggles facing democratic government and the individual citizen during this period.

Whilst critical advances made by theatre historians during this period are not the primary focus of this study they have certainly informed reflection and research on the relationship between the text and the space in relation to dramaturgy. Tiffany Stern's work on the early performances of *Love's Labour's Lost* at the Theatre illustrates the inclusivity of the early modern space, demonstrating how its location in Shoreditch helped to contextualize the setting and themes of the play: 'It was

²⁴ David Hare, *Stuff Happens* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004).

²⁵ *Fahrenheit 9/11*, dir. by Michael Moore (Optimum Releasing, 2004) (DVD).

²⁶ WikiLeaks describes itself as a 'not-for-profit media organisation. [...] We provide innovative, safe, anonymous ways for sources to leak information to our journalists' (< <http://wikileaks.org/About.html> [accessed 4 August 2013] (para.1)). In Britain, an investigative journalist, David Leigh, was part of a team publishing potentially politically sensitive leaked information in *The Guardian* newspaper. His book on how the WikiLeaks scandal broke, outlined some of the background to the surge of interest in confidential government information (David Leigh and Luke Harding, *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy* (London: Guardian Books, 2011)).

erected in Halliwell, one of the suburbs or “liberties” of London, which were less subject to London jurisdictions than the City itself, and was called the Theatre, a name that seems to have been borrowed from classical texts. From classical texts, too, must have come the inspiration for the Theatre’s round shape²⁷; a shape that would lend itself to inclusivity. Through comparison of this information with archaeological work by the Museum of London in 2010, which has been engaged in constructing 3D images of the Theatre, the verticality of the playhouse also emerges, thus presenting a more multi-dimensional account of the whole space and, by implication, the experience and response of the audience.²⁸ The horizontal and vertical planes of the stages and auditoria discussed in the following case studies are central to the methodology used to investigate them. Stern also notes, with reference to Aernout van Buchel’s copy of De Witt’s sketch of the Swan: ‘Though the theatre is itself circular, its stage is rectangular and protrudes or thrusts out into the middle of the auditorium.’²⁹ This configuration of the stage in the playhouse has not only informed the layout of Shakespeare’s Globe, which has increasingly used thrust platforms built right out into the yard, but can also be detected in the architecture of the Courtyard auditorium and others. These buildings echo the shapes and environments of classical and Elizabethan stages, facilitating investigation of the relationship between the uses of the horizontal and vertical spaces suggested by the written texts in the modern playhouse space. It is arguable that the preferred relatively empty modern theatrical space marks a reversion to older commercial

²⁷ Tiffany Stern, *Making Shakespeare: From Page to Stage*, repr. edn (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 12.

²⁸ The archaeological excavation in Shoreditch took place in 2010. The computer generated image of the Theatre (<<http://www.explorethetheatre.co.uk/>> [accessed 28 July 2013] (Gallery section) clearly demonstrates the verticality of the space, a feature used to intensely comic effect by Shakespeare in Act 4 of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.

²⁹ Stern, *Making Shakespeare*, p. 22.

spaces of the early modern age. Most recently, Stern has suggested that while critical accounts based on theatre history and the texts themselves ‘provide and collate data, the *impact* of the material they have gathered together on play-texts, actors and audiences has not been fully addressed.’³⁰ Examining Shakespeare’s own metatheatrical use of the space, which ‘could be seen as the reverse of alienation’³¹, Stern’s comments on spatial and textual relationships are striking: ‘The play’s structure [...] was both a manifestation of and a consequence of the theatre’s structure.’³² The premise invites investigation to see how it might be applied to the modern theatre space³³ to show the influence of this relationship on our understanding of dramaturgic processes in the recent past.

Theatre historians have also expanded methods for exploring performance from the practitioner’s perspective and established closer links with performance studies. Stern’s investigations with Simon Palfrey on Shakespeare’s use of parts and the relationships between the text and the experience of the practitioner on the stage, other conditions of performance and other plays facilitate the approach here towards investigating texts more closely to detect patterns of dramaturgic processes. Frequent performance of a range of plays within a short space of time leads Palfrey and Stern to conclude that ‘a “part” in one play will have been easily comparable with – even conflatable with – a part in another play. The part has a *physical* economy that

³⁰ Tiffany Stern, ‘Introduction’, in *Shakespeare’s Theatres and the Effects of Performance*, ed. by Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 1-8 (p. 2).

³¹ Tiffany Stern, ‘This Wide and Universal Theatre’, in *Shakespeare’s Theatres and the Effects of Performance*, ed. by Karim-Cooper and Stern, pp. 11-32 (p. 14).

³² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³³ Lucy Bailey’s *Titus Andronicus* and Dominic Dromgoole’s productions of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *King Lear* in Chapters Four, Five and Seven offer more detail on the application of this idea.

facilitates not only intra-play but also inter-play references.³⁴ This inevitably leads to interest in other aspects of playmaking, such as the use of the space by the actors or how themes are developed in different plays when generic expectations are suspended.³⁵ Palfrey and Stern also debate the dramatist's and actors' familiarity with the capabilities of the ensemble company, suggesting that 'if an actor were sensitive to verbal nuance, picking up each emotional transition, expressing gradations or emotion with finesse and clarity, then Shakespeare may well have been encouraged to write still more subtly for him [...] as much as he wrote 'to' his identifiable skills he wrote around them'³⁶. In his consideration of parts Palfrey also notes that the text 'had to be self-directing. The play was made by the decisions of the actors'³⁷ and that as a result 'the play is always in a sense *about to be* – it is unfinished, incomplete, always awaiting those moments of risk or withholding, when the actor turns potential into action, or populates a gap with a movement that the text invites, perhaps foreshadows, but does not necessarily finally prescribe.'³⁸ Palfrey imparts a sense of the text's instability during performance but nuance, implied meaning and paralinguistic gesture become concrete ideas for investigation. A method for discussing how the 'moments of risk or withholding' are negotiated when they finally arrive is desirable. When the spectator is present, the audience makes its own contribution to these processes of making meaning from the play-text as it is delivered during performance.

³⁴ Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford: University Press, 2007), pp. 6-7. This aspect of the text and performance is considered in the discussions on the character development of Berowne and Edmund in Chapters Five and Seven.

³⁵ The use of comedy in tragedy and vice versa for coercing the audience into play-making is discussed in Chapters Four, Six and Seven of the thesis.

³⁶ Palfrey and Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts*, p. 5.

³⁷ Simon Palfrey, *Doing Shakespeare*, 2nd edn, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen Drama, 2011), p. 4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

In Blair's 'surveillance society'³⁹ the uneasy relationship between democratic freedom and the activities of watching and being watched was cause for debate. In performance studies, critical interest in spectatorship increased. Palfrey contends that 'we have to acknowledge just how various, and to a degree how unknown, Shakespeare's audiences are'⁴⁰. However, just as research by William B. Worthen, Barbara Hodgdon and others has been instructive initially in highlighting the significance of the material conditions of the theatre space and the wider environment of performance, so the work of Susan Bennett, Dennis Kennedy, Bridget Escolme, Baz Kershaw and others informs the methodology for considering modern spectatorship developed for this thesis. Bennett's essay 'Universal Experience: The City as Tourist Stage'⁴¹ and Kennedy's *The Spectator and the Spectacle: Audiences in Modernity and Postmodernity*⁴² are particularly useful for their consideration of the global audience and its impact on the increasing demand for involvement in spectacular entertainment. Escolme's *Talking to the Audience: Shakespeare, Performance, Self*⁴³, investigating the methods practitioners employ to

³⁹ I am grateful to Dr Deana Rankin for the discussion on this topic. A report prepared for Richard Thomas, the government's Information Commissioner 2002-2009, defines surveillance thus: 'The attention is first *purposeful*; the watching has a point that can be justified, in terms of control, entitlement, or some other publicly agreed goal. Then it is *routine*; it happens as we all go about our daily business, it's in the weave of life. But surveillance is also *systematic*; it is planned and carried out according to a schedule that is rational, not merely random. Lastly, it is *focused*; surveillance gets down to details. While some surveillance depends on aggregate data, much refers to identifiable persons, whose data are collected, stored, transmitted, retrieved, compared, mined and traded.' (Kirstie Ball, David Lyon, David Murakami Wood, Clive Norris, Charles Raab and others, *A Report on the Surveillance Society* ed. by David Murakami Wood, (http://www.ico.org.uk/~media/documents/library/Data_Protection/Practical_application/SURVEILLANCE_SOCIETY_FULL_REPORT_2006.PDF), 2006 [accessed 29 July 2013], pp. 1-98, (p. 4 para. 3)). The same definitions could be applied to watching Shakespeare in performance.

⁴⁰ Palfrey, *Doing Shakespeare*, p. 15.

⁴¹ Susan Bennett, 'Universal Experience: The City as Tourist Stage', in *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies*, ed. by Tracy C. Davis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 76-90.

⁴² Dennis Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle: Audiences in Modernity and Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁴³ Bridget Escolme, *Talking to the Audience: Shakespeare, Performance, Self* (London: Routledge, 2005).

address the audience invites closer scrutiny of the processes involved in creating them over time and between plays. Kershaw's *Theatre Ecology: Environments and Performance Events*⁴⁴, published towards the end of the timeframe under discussion, is sceptical of the notion of audience interactivity whereas research by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper published in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*⁴⁵ provides detailed analysis of the complex nature of the actor/audience contract in the performance space. Robert Weimann's research over the decade and more is of particular relevance for developing ideas about how and why conventional boundaries between stage and audience are continually crossed. By reading the plays from these perspectives our understanding of them is enriched through consideration of professional responses to staging requirements. These approaches have narrowed the focus of the case studies so that they include analysis of a) directorial and conceptual approaches, b) the physical interpretation of the spoken text by the actor, c) design concepts and d) the reception of performances by the audience. These key elements of production are identified by Weimann in *Representation and Performance: the Uses of Authority in Shakespeare's Theatre* (1995) and are considered to include 'an irreducible investment of the non-representable energy, labour, needs, and exhaustion of actors' minds and bodies'⁴⁶. In Britain, the professional careers of practitioners referred to in this study are the cumulative result of acquiring skills and experience across a wide range of working environments, including fringe, small-scale and mainstream theatre and other platforms such as

⁴⁴ Baz Kershaw, *Theatre Ecology: Environments and Performance Events* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

⁴⁵ Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008),

⁴⁶ Robert Weimann, 'Representation and Performance: The Uses of Authority in Shakespeare's Theatre' in *Materialist Shakespeare*, ed. by Ivo Kamps (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 198 -217 (p. 201).

television and film, over decades. The transference of these skills and practices between institutions has resulted in innovative staging techniques. Comparative analysis of the texts using a combined critical approach to consider these techniques, therefore, enables dramatic features to emerge that complicate received views of them, creating a vision of these plays as interactive dialogues between the dramatist, the text, the practitioner and the audience at their particular moment of presentation.

Analysis of participation and the spaces in which it takes place shows that areas of closer contact between the spectators, the actors and the imagined and real environments of the plays, traditionally defined by Weimann as *locus* and *platea*, are particularly fruitful. Weimann identifies the *locus* as ‘a fairly specific imaginary locale or self-contained space in the world of the play’⁴⁷ and the *platea* as ‘an opening in the *mise-en-scène* through which the place and time of the stage-as-stage and the cultural occasion itself are made either to assist or resist the socially and verbally elevated, spatially and temporally remote representation.’⁴⁸ The *platea* offers a space where actor/audience interaction takes place in real time. In his original discussion of these areas in 1987 he argues that they establish ‘a flexible relationship between the play world and the real world.’⁴⁹ Multi-layered views of the texts in performance are created and a further range of interpretations of character and motives for action on the stage is made possible. Awareness of liminality and its uses therefore complicates existing accounts of the plays. The aim of the case studies

⁴⁷ Robert Weimann, ‘Space (in)divisible: *locus* and *platea* revisited’, in *Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare’s Theatre*, ed. by Helen Higbee and William West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 180-215 (p. 181).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*, ed. by Robert Schwartz repr. edn (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 80.

is to analyse these uses of the playhouse space by developing ideas which link them with the plays' infrastructures and themes, exemplified in the approach to *King Lear*.

Robert Weimann and Douglas Bruster contend that *King Lear* 'asserts the freedom of a popular play to reveal how royal power is both solemnized and lost in a stately act of division, whereupon political rule is beset by oppression, infested by corruption, and overrun by criminal acts of self-interest.'⁵⁰ The character of Edmund in *King Lear* in recent performance, for example, has developed from a malcontent on the fringes of the action into an attractive central figure who provides a structural link for the Gloucester/Lear double-plot and demands attention from the audience by allowing it full access to the different forms of his duplicity. The audience's viewing perspective on the plot becomes more complicated as it constantly shifts its position, thereby achieving an acute awareness of the play's cruel ironies during performance. Weimann and Bruster's focus on the appropriation and use of multi-faceted disguise by characters for the explicit purpose of creating different types of contact with the spectator⁵¹ can be used to develop commentaries on comparative performances. The case study of *King Lear*, focusing on the character development of both Edmund and Edgar and their role-playing within the performance space, serves to illustrate the perspectives selected for investigation here. Close reading of the disguises of these characters clarifies the dramaturgic processes and purposes of linking and developing the spatial and emotional relationships between the character, the actor and the audience in the space at specific moments, showing how these inter-relationships contribute to the tragic outcome of the play.

⁵⁰ Robert Weimann and Douglas Bruster, *Shakespeare and the Power of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 200.

⁵¹ Weimann and Bruster, *Shakespeare and the Power of Performance*, pp. 199-223. Their work on Edmund and Edgar underpins the discussion on the relationship between disguise and the audience on pp. 28-9 and in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

When *King Lear* is investigated for the purpose of discovering more about its enduring appeal to an audience, the interdependence of its structural features and epic and intimate dimensions emerges. Brecht's use of the epic perspective as a dramatic tool enabled his audiences to reflect on what they witnessed. "Epic" was the general term [...] for all those technical features of a Brecht production – the use of a spare stage, white lighting, half curtain, masks, emblematic props, selectively authentic costume, tableaux, and acting style'⁵² according to Peter Brooker. Brecht himself speculated on the desired effect of such staging practices on the audience: '[The] epic theatre's spectator says: I'd never have thought it – That's not the way – That's extraordinary, hardly believable – It's got to stop – The sufferings of this man appal me, because they are unnecessary – That's great art; nothing obvious in it – I laugh when they weep, I weep when they laugh.'⁵³ Brecht considered the moral and political purpose of drama but also the possibilities of comic reaction to tragedy⁵⁴ and the active engagement of the audience. Both reactions are solicited by characters such as Aaron, Berowne or Edmund in Shakespearean drama. The consideration of scenes, and moments within scenes, in which these characters appear demonstrates the value of detecting and comparing patterns of staging. Brecht clearly influenced directors such as Trevor Nunn, who directed Ian McKellen in the title role in *King Lear* at the Courtyard Theatre for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2007. Both Nunn and McKellen were part of an institutional ideological process in Britain which

⁵² Peter Brooker, 'Key Words in Brecht's Theory and Practice', in *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*, ed. by Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 184-200 (p. 189).

⁵³ Bertolt Brecht, 'Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction', in *Brecht on Theatre, The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. by John Willett, 3rd edn (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), pp. 69-76 (p. 71).

⁵⁴ This is debated further in relation to the observations of Adrian Poole and John Kerrigan on the tragicomic aspects of revenge tragedy in Chapter Four.

developed production practices in smaller spaces for main house environments from the 1970s onwards and which enabled audiences to view the plays from a much more intimate perspective. These practices not only created the potential for greater proximity of an audience to the stage, and therefore intimacy between spectator and actor, but also closer access to epic moments in the action; a powerful combination of staging techniques. Moreover, like Brecht, the productions discussed in this thesis increasingly employed ensemble-style casts, allowing for much more holistic readings of performances by audiences, sometimes providing deliberately disjointed platforms for contemplation of the written texts. These aspects serve to complicate readings of the plays and the meanings implied by them, partly because they combine naturalistic staging with elements of metatheatricality which break or punctuate conventional audience/actor boundaries. The conditions of recent performance have allowed these kinds of textual readings to develop as a natural consequence of staging techniques used in the thrust and in the round.

Understanding the connection between the epic and intimate aspects of dramatic structure supports the audience's developing perception of the characters' struggles to exist within patriarchal hierarchical structures in the plays. Study of scenes from an early play, *Titus Andronicus*, for example, aids a discussion of the interdependence of the epic and intimate moments that infuse intense and often spectacular violence with dark comedy revolving round the plight of the individual. Playing *Titus Andronicus* in the conditions of the round also makes it possible to experience the playwright's manipulation of sections of the audience whilst simultaneously developing its unified strength as an active crowd. This in turn advances our understanding of the development and use of these techniques over

time in other plays of similar content, such as *King Lear*. Performance analysis also demonstrates the uses of the vertical playing spaces above the horizontal planes of the stage and auditorium and the varying purposes of contact with the audience within particular scenes. By deconstructing these uses of the space, more details about character development for particular purposes are revealed. For example, in *King Lear* characters such as Edmund and Edgar, who work within and outside the world of the play through the use of aside and soliloquy, are instrumental in creating multi-dimensional viewing perspectives from which the events of the play and its themes can be absorbed. Edmund is capable of producing atmospheres of anxiety and jealousy through his appeal to sections of the audience at selected moments, underpinning the themes of duplicity and treachery. Edmund and Edgar also employ a range of physical and other disguises for positive and negative purposes, helping to emphasise the metatheatrical nature of the text through intimate exchanges with parts of the audience which deliberately exclude others. The result is to increase tension through dramatic irony and intensify interest in outcomes for these and other characters. Edgar, for example, is responsible for orchestrating two vertical falls in the play⁵⁵; his father's failed suicide attempted at the illusory cliffs at Dover Beach and that of his brother in the final act. Symbolically these are powerful events which indicate the, albeit temporary or unstable, restoration of the hierarchical structure. For example, Gloucester's life is not extinguished at the moment of his choosing and he has to return to the world. The successful dramatisation of this moment and revelation of its multiple meanings depends on a profound act of trust which is created between the playwright, the actor and the audience and fostered in the

⁵⁵ I am grateful to Dr Emma Smith for the discussion on this point.

specific conditions of performance in the playhouse space. Furthermore, as the close analysis of Gloucester's use of language on the road to Dover in Chapter Seven demonstrates, such moments are the result of embedding perspectival details in the text long before the climax of a scene or sequence of events is encountered by the audience and the actors, thereby helping to reinforce its symbolic and dramatic impact. The detailed study of *King Lear* in performance therefore serves to summarise and accentuate the interaction between text and context emphasised here.

To summarise, the selected productions of Shakespeare's plays performed between 1997 and 2008 in London and Stratford-upon-Avon, at Shakespeare's Globe, and the Olivier auditorium of the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company's Royal Shakespeare and Courtyard Theatres, demonstrate how the plays enabled interactive partnerships to develop between the audience, the practitioners and the text. The productions were developed in response to institutional ideologies that were unique to each of these companies yet show elements of interdependence. The ideologies evolved out of contextual factors that were subject to change and included the need to develop simpler staging methods. These conditions had an impact on production practice in respect of the choices of plays that were performed, the use of the theatrical space and audience reception. Institutional changes were the result of four main extrinsic and intrinsic developments. The extrinsic political and cultural factors already identified were the transition from a Conservative to a New Labour government in Britain in 1997 and the impact of global political actions that affected British government policy at home and abroad. The intrinsic factors were firstly emerging consumption trends in the arts that showed an increasing demand for audience interactivity at the site of

performance and secondly the economic need for publicly funded and commercial theatres to attract and address a broader global audience demographic or face closure. The themes and structures of the plays considered here reflect the effects of spiritual, cultural and political transition on the individual. Thus a balance is struck between the texts and a range of contexts in this analysis for the purpose of demonstrating how relationships between practitioners and audiences of the recent past have been developed to enable further access to, and use of, the processes of the plays in performance.

In order for audiences of the recent past to draw effectively on these contextual aspects and create meanings from their reception of performance, a variety of spatial relationships and other strategies were deployed by theatre practitioners who offered different conceptual approaches, including naturalistic or abstract, metatheatrical staging, in addition to the increased use of ensemble casts. The case studies of this thesis show that these approaches were developed for the plays in individual productions, or as part of seasons designed to attract a broader, younger, multicultural and international audience demographic with different attitudes, values and expectations. The spatial relationships and strategies used in recent productions illuminate structural and thematic features of the texts in more detail. These clarifications can be observed most particularly when the epic and intimate moments coincide and they are selected, therefore, as the focus of my research material. It is demonstrated that features presented in this way have hitherto been overlooked or neglected by literary and theatrical critics in favour of views of the plays that focus on their generic qualities, or consider them solely in terms of current critical

approaches without the benefit of the close comparative readings provided and enhanced by the experience of performance.

In the final conclusion of this research, the ways in which readings of Shakespeare's plays were expanded through the changing theatrical conditions of performance during this period are considered. The research will demonstrate more integrated and integral relationships emerging between the epic and intimate aspects of the plays and the uses of horizontal and vertical planes of the stage than was previously recognised. Analysis of scenes and moments in the plays which can be related to the whole text, including its spoken language, its implied action, other aspects of its stagecraft such as adumbrative sequences of events, and also the conditions of performance, demonstrates the function of these relationships. Their contributions to our knowledge of the structural techniques used for creating meaning are finally indicated. These include how suggestions for staging which are already embedded in the text foster different kinds of participation by both actors and audience during the performance, often through laughter or implied irony or the development of an actor/audience contract. The case studies show not only that there has been a convergence of performance-based analysis and literary criticism in the twenty-first century, but also that an approach to the texts combining these practices with consideration of the experience of performance as a way of understanding the texts' meaning-making processes in more detail deepens our understanding of some aspects of the plays. The next chapter therefore sets up the methodology in more detail, exploring the reasons for the choices of texts and scenes for the case studies and outlining the approaches that will be developed for the analysis of them in subsequent chapters of the thesis.

Chapter Two.

Towards a Methodology.

This chapter explains the rationale for the development of the research methodology through reference to previous analytical methods and shows how it will be applied in each of the case studies. The intention is to facilitate cross-reference between plays and playing conditions to identify whether any specific dramaturgic techniques emerge from this process. Since the current study is probing a politically motivated question about what happened to production of the plays in Tony Blair's egalitarian Britain, the previous discussions of extrinsic and intrinsic conditions provide useful background. The outcome should be to create an approach that could be used to test further questions of this kind in other specified political timeframes, institutional environments and performance spaces.

The second edition of Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield's influential *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism* (1994) drew attention to the difficulties of understanding Shakespeare's plays in the existing academic and theatrical institutional frameworks in which they were considered:

It is often said that a play only really exists when it is given life in a performance [...] But, of course, performances differ greatly from each other; so what, then, is 'the play'? The question bulks especially large in the instance of 'Shakespeare's plays' where, on the one hand there are so many and diverse performances and, on the other hand, so much editorial effort is expended on establishing the text nearest to Shakespeare's presumed intentions.¹

Performance as a source of information about playmaking is acknowledged but its diversity appears to create problems. Furthermore, Dollimore and Sinfield argued

¹ Alan Sinfield, 'Introduction: Reproductions, Interventions', in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 154 -157 (p. 154).

that “‘Shakespeare” is not a fixed entity but a concept produced in specific political conditions, a powerful cultural token, a site of struggle and change.’² To examine this proposal Sinfield developed an overview of institutional ideological change at the Royal Shakespeare Company which was the primary provider of Shakespearean production in Britain at the time. As an indoor institution, it had a relatively limited audience and whilst its repertoire included innovative work in its studio spaces it did not have a reputation as an international production house. At the time of Dollimore and Sinfield’s research, New Labour was being established but the transference of political power was not yet tangible. Shakespeare’s Globe, an outdoor performance space based on original playing conditions matched with original practices for a global audience, was a project yet to become part of the competitive commercial and artistic scene. During the interim period, small-scale theatres such as the Almeida and the Donmar Warehouse in London had been reinvigorated by changes in artistic directorship³ and were producing high-quality productions using a combination of British and international classics and new work. These comparatively low-budget productions attracted celebrity casts and often transferred to the West-End.⁴ By 1997, the same year that Shakespeare’s Globe opened, the Royal National Theatre was playing Shakespeare’s *King Lear* to a select audience in its smallest space. These events later came to be seen as radical developments in the ways in which Shakespeare’s plays were consumed. However, Michael Billington notes of The Royal Shakespeare Company that ‘while it may have reflected the contemporary

² Alan Sinfield, ‘Royal Shakespeare: Theatre and the Making of Ideology’, in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Dollimore and Sinfield, 2 nd edn, pp. 182-225 (p. 182).

³ Ian McDiarmid and Jonathan Kent took over the Almeida in 1990. Sam Mendes was appointed as Artistic Director of the Donmar Warehouse in 1990.

⁴ An overview of artistic, institutional and economic developments in small scale theatres in London during the early 1990s is provided by Michael Billington in *State of the Nation: British Theatre Since 1945* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), pp. 342-348.

world in its management practices, [it] signally failed to engage with it in its artistic policies’⁵ during this time. The *Complete Works Festival* produced by Michael Boyd in 2006 at Stratford-upon-Avon provides a comprehensive illustration of advances in political policy in institutional practice at the Royal Shakespeare Company since his appointment as Artistic Director in 2003.

In producing the *Complete Works Festival* Boyd according to Jonathan Bate ‘wanted to put across three messages: the RSC is committed to ensemble, it is open to new styles and new work, and it is not provincial’.⁶ Boyd’s professional background had benefited from his work abroad, notably in Moscow. Here he experienced the benefits of ensemble work, linking this with the potential uses of space:

It taught me about the mutual understanding, intimacy, recklessness that ensemble makes possible. It was beyond anything in British theatre [...] One of the main reasons our theatre is so text-based, to the detriment of the physical and the spatial, is that you can study the text cheaply and quite fast with the right actors [...] In Moscow the Malaya Bronnaya used to rehearse for three months on-stage with full technical support, so there was time to manage and to develop the verbal, the aural and the visual.⁷

For Boyd, part of the legacy of the festival would be to return to his previous ensemble way of working through Shakespeare’s history plays, including *Henry V*, as Bate suggests: ‘By reviving them on a larger stage, Boyd would showcase his distinctive mode of physical and political theatre to a much larger audience.’⁸ Boyd’s selection of international plays for the *Complete Works Festival* also indirectly

⁵ Billington, *State of the Nation*, p. 342.

⁶ Jonathan Bate, ‘Introducing the RSC *Complete Works Festival*’, *Cahiers Élizabéthains Special Issue 2007*, 10 (2007), 3-6 (p. 3).

⁷ Michael Boyd, ‘Michael Boyd Speaks to Peter J. Smith’, *Cahiers Élizabéthains Special Issue 2007*, 10 (2007), 13-17 (p. 14).

⁸ Bate, ‘Introducing the RSC *Complete Works Festival*’, p. 3.

informed his later work on the vertical spaces above the stage and in the auditorium. In particular, Yukio Ninagawa's *Titus Andronicus*, played in Japanese, and Tim Supple's Indian *A Midsummer Night's Dream* made spectacular uses of these areas. Boyd's vision for the festival shows a sense of responsibility towards the work of other countries and companies: 'There are a lot of good Shakespeare productions outside the RSC, both in the UK and internationally. I think [the *Complete Works Festival*] was partly an acknowledgement that some of that good work was underfunded and that an event like this could act as patron in seed-funding interesting explorations.'⁹ Bringing international productions to the site where they could be played alongside British work demonstrates how the ideology of the Royal Shakespeare Company had adapted to the political and aesthetic times.¹⁰ The methods developed for considering Shakespeare's plays in these particular conditions carry forward the work of critics such as Dollimore and Sinfield.

As Jean E. Howard argues, Shakespeare's plays are 'carefully crafted to control and shape what an audience hears, sees and experiences moment by moment [... and] this verbal and visual orchestration is central to the effectiveness and meaning of every play.'¹¹ Increased adherence to the stage directions in the text and stage blocking of movement explores textual dramatic structure through visual engagement. This is illustrated by performances of *Titus Andronicus*, a play that appears to be lacking in dramatic structure and yet sustains an audience through linked sequences of action. These moments involve the spectator through

⁹ Boyd, 'Michael Boyd speaks to Peter. J. Smith', p. 13. Tim Supple's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was funded by The British Council.

¹⁰ Boyd's comments largely reflect adherence to the Arts Council of Britain's priorities set out in its *Policy for the Theatre in England, July 2000* as discussed in Chapter One and illustrated in Appendix A.

¹¹ Jean E. Howard, *Shakespeare's Art of Orchestration: Stage Technique and Audience Response* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 3.

presentation of graphic violence in visual tableaux and spectacular stage effects. Visual representations of patriarchal hierarchies and their collapse in performance can be observed in the uses of the vertical spaces above the stage in order to create fragile pictures that are liable to distortion and disintegration, as the analysis of Ninagawa's production shows. Other areas previously frequented solely by the audience, including ingress and exit points, the theatres' galleries and extensions of the horizontal planes of traverse and thrust platforms in outdoor and indoor auditoria, have also been used for the same purpose, notably at Shakespeare's Globe for Lucy Bailey's *Titus Andronicus* and the Courtyard Theatre for Boyd's *Henry V*. Comparative analysis of the ways in which directors use these areas is therefore productive. The verbal texturing and linking of aural and visual relationships between characters in individual scenes in the spaces in which they are played provide a cumulative multi-dimensional and multi-sensory impact on reception, as the discussions on *Love's Labour's Lost*, *King Henry V* and *King Lear* show. It is also argued that the use of the whole auditorium space during performance and the targeted inclusion of the audience at this time actively encouraged the disruption of conventional audience/actor relationships. Thus the problems and tensions that this instability poses for individual characters who strive to exist within them emerge. Analysis of the chosen texts from these perspectives consequently challenges existing appraisals of them as lacking in dramatic structure because they were written early in Shakespeare's writing life or because their nuances are archaic or inaccessible to modern audiences.

According to Baz Kershaw: 'In the late 1990s [...] it was not at all clear where New Labour's "third way" was likely to lead theatre in Britain, politically: to a more

democratic or a more hierarchical dispensation.’¹² The choice of plays staged by the main providers of Shakespeare performance confirm a continuing anxiety about the role of the individual existing within hierarchical structures, from the monarch to the basest beggar. *Titus Andronicus* offers an intimate and murderous father/daughter relationship between Titus Andronicus and Lavinia, presented in the context of the collapsing political infrastructures of patriarchal Rome. Like *King Lear* the play depicts the effects of cruel social disorder on the family. Its main difference is the presentation of moments that produce laughter in the context of graphic violence. Similar moments in *King Lear* do not produce laughter in the same way. *Titus Andronicus* opens with the return of a triumphant war hero and rapidly descends into farce with an interrupted ritual of burial that allows the comic pace of the play to develop alongside its brutality. Lavinia’s fate is to be traumatised by rape and mutilation whilst Titus is also a victim of violence, tricked by Aaron into offering his own hand for severance in order to save his sons in a scene of comic horror. The graphic visual image of Titus’s disempowerment, as the hero becomes victim to his former prisoner, epitomizes the reversal of order presented in the broader dramatic action. The structure of the plot thereafter is concerned with achieving retributive and restorative justice for the Andronici, evolving out of savage attempts not only to conceal the identities of the perpetrators of Lavinia’s injuries but also to inhibit the due process of revenge. These dramatic moments produce disruptive dramatic gaps that enable the audience to become complicit in stage business concerned with events that must follow such provocative acts. Their purpose is to elicit the involvement of the spectator in activity on the stage that complicates reactions of both horror and

¹² Kershaw, *Theatre Ecology: Environments and Performance Events*, p. 178.

laughter at the absurd situations in which evil attempts to prevail. The rapid juxtapositions of extreme reactions in *Titus Andronicus* therefore appear to provide a coercive rather than alienating function during performance and thus the importance of investigating them here is clear.

The spoken language of *Titus Andronicus* relies on rhetoric for its power whilst its stage directions suggest the creation of spectacular visual effects. However, the combined impact of its ironic tragicomic elements, structural textual patterns of dislocation and striking paralinguistic features develops the play's epic processes for reaching the audience. The most shocking event in terms of building tension remains the excision of Lavinia's tongue which takes place unusually early on in Act 2. The effect of the attack on Lavinia is intensified not only by her repeated presence thereafter but also by the location in which it takes place: a stage used for expressing emotion through speech and also for presenting an audience with memorable visual points of reference that command attention. Both of these elements are part of the meaning-making process and they are manipulated to extremes in *Titus Andronicus* through the presentation of Lavinia as dumb and horrifically mutilated, creating anxiety about utterance and gesture in the context of the performance. In these conditions each element is interlinked through director-led interpretation to produce fast-paced, increasingly grotesque activity on the stage.¹³ Productions of *Titus Andronicus* at Shakespeare's Globe and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in 2006, directed by Lucy Bailey and Yukio Ninagawa respectively, presented contrasting conceptual interpretations of the themes of violence and revenge. The former engaged sections of the audience as complicit and active spectators, evoking a range

¹³ The possible reasons for this use of the stage are discussed in more detail in relation to Jonathan Bate's observations on the connections between Shakespeare's and Ovid's use of form, structure and language in Chapter Four pp. 119-121.

of comic reactions to tragic situations through direct address; the latter intensified the play's overwhelming sense of chaos against a backdrop of austere yet compelling visual beauty, distancing the audience through a Brechtian metatheatrical setting and representational violence. Ninagawa's version in particular depicted social and political conflict, manipulating the spectators and their gaze through repeated arousal and dislocation of visual and aural senses. This was partly achieved through the use of tableaux emphasising the epic scale of the narrative.

Whilst the forest of *Titus Andronicus* is used to produce a scene depicting the effects of sexual violence which reflects the wider destruction of social and political order, the events in the park of Navarre in the comedy *Love's Labour's Lost* also serve to link the theme of hunting with relationships at court. The inclusion of a hunting scene, as H. R. Woudhuysen observes, 'suggests an obvious analogy – one made more explicitly and violently in *Titus Andronicus* – between the predatory natures of hunters and of lovers.'¹⁴ The overtly formal structure and intricate wit of the verbal patterning of *Love's Labour's Lost* recreates the oppressive social tensions of the court, depicted in different narrative strands which deal with courtship. Much of the language of the play revolves around the development of witty, and often cruel, exchanges as the tensions rise and fall, creating interest in analysis of character-driven relationships which strive to break the patterns of social order imposed upon them. The main plot creates the problems encountered by the protagonist Berowne who lives in a courtly society where restrictive codes of conduct suppress more natural human needs and desires. Performances of the play at Shakespeare's Globe in 2007 and the Courtyard Theatre in 2008, directed by

¹⁴ H. R. Woudhuysen, 'Introduction', in *Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. by H. R. Woudhuysen, The Arden Shakespeare 3rd series (London: Thomson Learning, 2001), pp. 1-106 (p. 38).

Dominic Dromgoole and Gregory Doran respectively, produced contrasting and complementary readings which broke the patterns suggested by the text's language and sequencing of activity within scenes. These productions, like those of *Henry V* outlined below, also suggested a closer, more purposeful dramaturgic connection between the aristocrats and their servants. The methods of encouraging engagement between actor and audience included celebrity casting of a specific kind which offered intertextual references to other productions of better-known Shakespeare plays within a theatre season. This practice developed expectations of character or encouraged reflection on themes, as the casting of David Tennant as Hamlet and Berowne for the same season at the Courtyard Theatre shows. Like Hamlet, for example, Berowne is an outsider in the court but drawn inexorably towards its centre and frequently solicits sympathy through direct address. Research by Graham Holderness, Nick Potter and John Turner¹⁵ and also Agnes Heller¹⁶ on the problems of existing in a competitive court environment is useful for critical analysis of how these characters behave in performance.

Doran's production of *Love's Labour's Lost* centred on spoken and visual irony, ambiguity, innuendo and direct address, drawing out the intricate wit of the play's whole dramatic structure and revealing the ultimate impossibility of escape from conventional socio-political structures. Analysis of the staging practices and audience responses at Shakespeare's Globe and the Courtyard Theatre shows that literary critical appraisal of the text as archaic and lacking in relevance to more contemporary society needs revision. The case study for this play demonstrates how

¹⁵ Graham Holderness, Nick Potter and John Turner, *Shakespeare Out of Court: Dramatisations of Court Society* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990).

¹⁶ Agnes Heller, *Renaissance Man*, trans. by Richard E. Allen (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).

the text secures the audience's attention by manipulating the gap between actor and spectator in the space, using the characters of Berowne and Costard to work together throughout the events of the plot to create the conditions of misrule. When the scenes involving Berowne secretly observing social chaos from the vertical space above the stage or the presentation of his interaction with Costard's Pompey in the Nine Worthies play-within-the-play are investigated, the links between these scenes, the characters who play in them and the darker themes of thwarted ambition and disappointment, become more apparent. By allowing the audience to discover the characters from different perspectives interactively and in much closer detail in performance, particularly at the Courtyard Theatre, the thematic and dramatic purposes of the links between the aristocrats and the characters from lower social orders is clarified, as the discussion of the scenes in which they appear together indicates.

Whereas *Love's Labour's Lost* satirizes the repressive nature of outmoded courtly convention in the world of Navarre's park, *King Henry V* presents personal and public reaction to shifts in medieval political hierarchy in a stage landscape of war with France. This play considers the nature of kingship and the difficulties facing the young monarch who leads his nation into war for the sake of political ambition and economic gain at great personal cost. Productions of *Henry V* played in the wider contexts of Britain's invasion of Iraq and its aftermath at the Olivier and Courtyard Theatres, directed by Nicholas Hytner in 2003 and Michael Boyd in 2007 respectively, reflected a perceived public mood of scepticism about the right to wage war abroad. They challenged mid and late twentieth-century readings of *King Henry V*, illustrated by the patriotic film interpretation by Laurence Olivier and the more

ambiguous character created by Kenneth Branagh for both the stage and his own film. Both Hytner and Boyd foregrounded Henry's relationships with the Eastcheap characters and highlighted the widening gap between the king and his subjects. Close investigation of the text provides evidence that their treatment of Henry's scenes with his prospective bride Katherine, using design concepts which reinforced a sense of growing isolation, reflected the insecurity of the king's political and personal status at the end of the play. Consideration of Henry's relationships with his subjects from the perspective of the soldiers of his army, who come from a much lower social order, shows the testing of chivalrous values such as loyalty and patriotism. The analysis shows how closely these attributes are linked with economic and political prosperity or deprivation. The examination of these values becomes a central focus for characters in Shakespeare's later tragedy of *King Lear*, which considers the demise of a successful king at the end of his reign and the problems created by the ambitious pursuit of power without due regard for spiritual and moral responsibility.

King Lear, then, returns to the theme of private and public hierarchical relationships driven by greed and cruelty. The play considers Lear's interaction with his daughters and provides a nihilistic outcome of war, madness and death that has a direct relevance for a post-modern, post-nuclear audience living with the possibility of self-destruction. It substitutes the green world of the comedies and the battlefields of the history plays with a bleak exterior landscape open to the full force of the elements, depicting the tragic conclusion of a life lived in response to the demands of kingship. *King Lear*, directed by Richard Eyre at the Cottesloe Theatre in 1997 as part of an acclaimed run of plays, demonstrated an artistic interest in returning to smaller-scale staging of classic texts. It helped to establish the idea that ensemble

casts created the opportunity for audiences to construct meanings from broader perspectives through closer contact with all of the characters on the stage. This performance affirmed *King Lear*'s relevance to and interest for the government of the day; Chris Smith notes that the new Prime Minister was 'deeply moved'¹⁷ by Eyre's production. A decade later Trevor Nunn directed the play for the Courtyard Theatre and Dominic Dromgoole presented it for Shakespeare's Globe, in 2007 and 2008. These productions crafted together the epic and intimate elements embedded in the text in different conditions to produce its predominantly tragic perspective. They emphasised the role of Edmund as instigator of the tragic business in the play, as the close readings by David Bevington and Robert Weimann indicate. These playing conditions also brought scenes such as Gloucester's attempted suicide much closer to the audience. Staging the Dover Cliff scene is traditionally a test of the director's skill and the ability of the actors to play. However, in these productions the scene created the opportunity of crossing the boundaries created by the proscenium arch.¹⁸

The case studies together therefore enable discussion of different kinds of plays, written and performed over a finite period of time. Comparative textual analysis identifies how the structures of the texts, including indications for staging and development of themes and characters, are revisited and reworked in the performance conditions of the recent past. The openings of *Titus Andronicus* and *King Lear*, for example, show tumultuous events surrounding paternal relationships as wider shifts in political power are instigated. The visual spectacle of *Titus*

¹⁷ Smith, *Creative Britain*, p. 4.

¹⁸ Jonathan Goldberg's essay 'Perspectives: Dover Cliff and the Conditions of Representation' was a significant text for developing the analytical approach for considering the use of the whole playhouse space for this scene. (Jonathan Goldberg, 'Perspectives: Dover Cliff and the Conditions of Representation', in *King Lear, Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. by Kiernan Ryan (London: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 145-153).

Andronicus is exemplified by Lavinia's mutilation which serves as a central event in the second act for representing the physical effects of shifting power away from an unstable democracy in the broader political landscape towards the struggle of the individual. Her repeated mute presence on the stage contrasts with the abrupt banishment of Cordelia in Act One until she returns to assist Lear in the final act of *King Lear* and the more gradual breakdown of social and linguistic interaction between the king and his subjects. Post-war productions of both of these plays by Peter Brook¹⁹ were considered ground-breaking not only in terms of production practice. They also contributed to shifting perspectives in critical approaches noted in Jan Kott's appraisal of them during the Cold War. Kott notes in his discussion of Brook's production of *Titus Andronicus* that it 'already contained – though still in a rough shape – the seed of all the great Shakespearean tragedies.'²⁰ Brook's interpretations of *Titus Andronicus* and *King Lear* were to have a lasting effect on approaches to staging Shakespeare, particularly at the Royal Shakespeare Company. The continuing influence of his methods can be detected clearly in the direction of *Titus Andronicus*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *King Henry V* and *King Lear* discussed here which used ensemble casts and a relatively bare stage. They also employ the vertical and mid-air spaces of the auditoria for the purposes of audience inclusivity and exposition of textual meaning. Through these uses of the space, the stage pictures can become multi-dimensional and multi-sensory for the spectator and the actor. In these productions sections of the audience became an interactive part of the stage picture in

¹⁹ Brook produced *Titus Andronicus* in 1955 at Stratford-upon-Avon and also *King Lear* in 1962.

²⁰ Jan Kott, 'Shakespeare – Cruel and True', in *Shakespeare our Contemporary*, trans. by Boleslaw Taborski, repr. edn (London: Methuen, 1965), pp. 217-224 (p. 218).

order to make meaning for the single spectator and, through that person, others in the audience.

The increased presence of Shakespeare in other media also had an impact on staging and reception during this period. Dennis Kennedy identifies ‘a movement in western theatre away from large scale production and toward psychological intimacies familiar from film and television’,²¹ although both of these forms use the actor/audience dynamic in ways that are not necessarily compatible with live performance. The actor is not physically present in space or time for a film or television audience and the editing techniques used for storytelling are not possible in the theatrical space. However, an interest in the interiority of character that is partly the result of film and television production of drama, with its conventions of direct address to the viewer or closely observed interaction between characters through close-up or over-the-shoulder shot, is evident in the productions discussed. Delivery of speech directly to the audience offers different perspectives of character from those presented to other characters within the world of the play.

The case studies chosen help to illustrate Shakespeare’s developing dramaturgical skill. Considering them sequentially allows for links between the plays to be made. For example, the use of soliloquy and aside which is developed over time is read closely to show how the dramatist establishes and manipulates the thresholds of the performance space. Berowne’s introspection in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and the expansion of his character as he explores the conflict between love and duty, foreshadows an identifiable pattern of action and its reception by the audience which is developed in *King Henry V*. Henry’s ruthless rejection of rebellious subjects

²¹ Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle*, p. 137.

whom he has loved, such as Bardolph or Falstaff, and his lack of success in winning Katherine's affection when he secures her hand in marriage through negotiations rooted in courtly convention illustrates the complexity of these relationships. The two presentations of Henry's character analysed here reveal the effects of public duty on individual desire. Similarly, reflection on the development of Berowne's role as bitter observer of courtly manners in *Love's Labour's Lost* becomes productive for consideration of how darkly jealous and ironic characters, such as Edmund in *King Lear*, are assimilated and understood by a modern audience.

The complex use of physical space and metaphoric space in these productions highlights an aspect of these plays which is often overlooked in textual analysis. Edmund begins his journey in *King Lear* by standing outside the main event of the transference of power and nearer to the audience as he plots the downfall of his own father. He manipulates the tragic action in the Gloucester plot and instigates the division and the extinction of Lear's family. Edmund's sibling Edgar is distanced further from the Lear household but he is instrumental in maintaining a dramatically crucial yet fragile strand of hope and tension. The intimacy of Edgar's moving role-playing to deceive his father into believing that he is where he wishes to be in the chosen productions is set against an epic illusory background that evokes the tragic landscape to its full extent. This scene epitomizes the skill of the dramatist to challenge the actors and the audience, testing their ability to 'play' together imaginatively in the theatrical space. Looking at the scene as it was performed in two specific places and times allows for further consideration of the potential uses of liminality offered by the stage directions and the dialogue in written texts. Close reading of performance is therefore a significant aspect of the methodology.

Production of Shakespeare as part of institutional seasons or cycles of plays; for example, the *Complete Works Festival* or *The Histories Cycle* at Stratford, was developed to appeal to an increasingly diverse and multi-cultural audience over time. Casting and playing methods were therefore adapted to encourage a holistic view of performance for audiences unused to conventional theatre practices. This audience included tourists but also spectators who had knowledge and understanding of current events in Britain and abroad. When considered in the context of how the plays were marketed, traditional critical perceptions of them as either literary masterpieces or structural failures need modification. For modern audiences increasingly accustomed to the comic elements of tragedy and the tragic elements of comedy, the changing conditions of reception became a significant part of the new perspective from which the plays' ironies and inconsistencies emerged and were communicated. During this period the theatrical space became increasingly metatheatrical in the Brechtian sense for a variety of reasons and directors laid emphasis on this aspect of the theatregoing experience in a number of ways. At the Royal National Theatre for *Henry V*, for example, the use of media technology clearly indicated a re-presentation of events at Harfleur and its aftermath in the form of a news broadcast, thus shifting the balance of power away from the characters towards the audience. James O'Rourke describes the effect achieved on the modern stage: 'As the screen images produced a mediated dialogue between Henry and the theatre audience, they offered a perfect alienation effect; Henry's character lost any sense of privileged scale, and he was located in the liminal space of the epic actor.'²²

His analysis contrasts with Stern's comments on the inclusive aspects of

²² James O'Rourke, *Retheorizing Shakespeare through Presentist Readings* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 80.

metatheatricality in the Elizabethan playhouse and shows how modern conditions can create a further range of possible interpretations of the role of the king.

Ralph Alan Cohen notes that: ‘Such moments as [...] King Henry exhorting his troops at Agincourt [...] are obviously moments in which Shakespeare has transformed the house into a part of the play. All of his plays have such public moments that transcend the bounds of the stage to include the world inside the theatre.’²³ In modern indoor and outdoor environments these moments of audience interactivity are increasingly employed in different ways, as the discussions of *Henry V* and *King Lear* at the Courtyard Theatre indicate. In some examples metatheatricality is incorporated into the design concept to reproduce the conditions of misrule, illustrated by Dominic Dromgoole’s production of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* at Shakespeare’s Globe. In productions of other plays metatheatrical staging emphasises the artificiality of playmaking, as in Ninagawa’s design concept for *Titus Andronicus* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre or Trevor Nunn’s setting of *King Lear* in a disused, crumbling theatre constructed on the stage at the Courtyard Theatre in Stratford. These stagings change the audience’s expectations of its own role in performance by crossing the boundaries between spectator and performer within the events of the play and its setting. The identification and discussion of other dramatic devices, such as adumbrative action or sequences of scenes that make traditional readings problematic, serve to illuminate the ways in which these meaning-making processes are present in the text and how they are used in performance.

To summarize, in the remainder of the thesis, the experiences of up to three selected scenes in performance of two different productions of the same play in the

²³ Ralph Alan Cohen, ‘Directing at the Globe and the Blackfriars’, in *Shakespeare’s Globe*, ed. by Carson and Karim-Cooper, pp. 211-225 (p. 219).

theatrical spaces and conditions in which they took place are compared with literary and theatrical analytical accounts of them. In addition to the context of performance the scenes are considered in the contexts of their written texts so that the inception and development of dramaturgic techniques can be identified. The following perspectives have also been employed as part of the research method: director-led relationships with the audience in productions of *Titus Andronicus* at Shakespeare's Globe in London and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon; actor/audience relationships in performances of *Love's Labour's Lost* at Shakespeare's Globe and the Courtyard Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon; design-focused relationships with the spectator in *Henry V* at the Olivier Theatre in London and the Courtyard Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon. The case studies do not necessarily use the economic criteria of public and private subsidy for analysis; the interest here lies in the innovative ways in which the playhouse space was used. The methodology is further tested by combining the approaches developed for the three case studies and applying them to three scenes from *King Lear* in two different productions which took place in the Courtyard Theatre in 2007 and Shakespeare's Globe in 2008 respectively. The discussion of Richard Eyre's production of *King Lear* at the Cottesloe in 1997 in Chapter Three is intended to establish some of the key issues facing theatrical practice and to show, by comparison, which changes had been absorbed into main house productions by the end of the period analysed.

This overview of the methodology used to consider the plays and productions selected for analysis has outlined a range of analytical perspectives of performance identifiable as sources of information about dramaturgic processes. This methodology constitutes an approach which acknowledges that performance analysis

enlivens and develops existing theatrical and literary accounts of the plays. It also reflects on much longer processes of political, cultural and social development. In order to situate this methodology within the critical and architectural landscape of the post-war era preceding the period and performances discussed in the case studies, the next chapter provides an overview of literary and performance criticism.

Chapter Three.

Setting the spatial and critical scene.

This chapter highlights relevant intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting production as well as the ways in which the study is informed by them. A retrospective overview of changing institutional ideological attitudes towards theatrical spaces and their uses in late twentieth and early twenty-first century Britain is developed in this chapter for it is here that the effects of shifts in political policy can be detected. Consideration is given to the architectural conditions of performance in the institutions identified previously and also the composition, expectations and behaviour of the audience. Developments in the literary and theatrical critical landscape during the transition to the new century are also discussed and are related to the chosen texts. Although they have not necessarily evolved at the same time, a combined analysis of major developments in each discipline reveals complementary and contrasting features, which enables the examination of the texts from differing viewpoints. When considered together, these perspectives produce a rigorous method for analysing the texts in performance. An exemplification of the process is offered through analysis of Richard Eyre's production of *King Lear* for the Royal National Theatre at the Cottesloe Theatre in 1997. This production of a major Shakespeare tragedy which was played on a traverse stage in the comparatively small space of a studio environment illustrates the simultaneous presentation of epic and intimate aspects of the play in close proximity to the spectator.

Theatre architecture and its impact on production practice.

During the 1980s and 1990s, attitudes to theatre architecture and the social and cultural uses of indoor theatrical spaces in Britain reveal that practitioners were increasingly predisposed towards change in institutional and production practice. The changes responded to emerging questions about the construction and purpose of permanent publicly funded theatre buildings and their effect on the plays in performance. Iain Mackintosh, an independent design consultant and designer of the Cottesloe Theatre, comments that ‘the generation of the 80s [...] rediscovered that the traditional ad hoc nature of British theatre, with only sparse technical facilities, was possibly an asset rather than a liability, since it emphasized the human scope of the actor and encouraged the imagination of the audience’¹ before returning to a ‘more theatrical style’² in the 1990s. His evaluation supports the reflections of Michael Elliott,³ who had already argued that the permanence offered by modern theatre building was problematic when changing political ideas and audience tastes and consumption patterns were considered. Elliott suggested that ‘something [...] less daunting, less expressive of civic or national pride, something perhaps less permanent’⁴ was needed that offered ‘a certain lightness and a sense of improvisation’.⁵ A desire to create a more fluid, transient environment in which to encounter performance was indicated. Elliott also predicted that the emerging trend

¹ Iain Mackintosh, ‘Introduction’ to ‘On Not Building For Posterity’ by Michael Elliott, in *Making Space for Theatre: British Architecture and Theatre since 1958*, ed. by Ronnie Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (Stratford-upon-Avon: Mulryne and Shewring, 1995), pp. 16-20 (p. 16).

² *Ibid.*

³ Michael Elliott, 1923-1984. Elliott was Resident Artistic Director of the Royal Exchange Theatre Company in Manchester. He joined the RSC in 1961 as Associate Director and was Artistic Director of the Old Vic (1962-3) before it became the National Theatre. He also served on the Building Committee for the National Theatre.

⁴ Michael Elliott, ‘On Not Building for Posterity’, transcript of Radio 3 broadcast, *TABS*, 31.2 (1973), 41-44 (p. 41).

⁵ *Ibid.*

of offering both main house and studio facilities in new theatre complexes would create ‘a polarisation between the large, expensive, grand, square and boring on the one hand, and the intimate, cheap, informal, exciting, left-wing on the other,’⁶ thereby identifying an undesirable artistic, social, cultural and political gap between production in the main house and studio space. This was counterproductive, he argued, since there was an ongoing need to overcome ‘anti-intellectual and anti-snob prejudice’⁷ in order to attract audiences who would secure the performances of the future.

It proved to be difficult for larger theatrical sites to accommodate this necessary development. Planned construction of the fabric of a theatre building cannot respond quickly enough to the changing needs of the audience. The transition from proscenium arch conditions of the Edwardian theatrical landscape to more open staging practices took much longer than half a century to establish. The scale of public and private investment needed to achieve it was a factor achieving such a transformation. The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, for example, was not redeveloped until 2006 as a result of partial funding from the National Lottery via Arts Council England.⁸ In any case, it was desirable to retain some features of the Edwardian playhouse, such as several layers of seating, for economic reasons. Seating arranged in tiered levels is not unlike the original outdoor playhouse and adds to a sense of verticality which contrasts with the flat horizontal plane of the stage; a feature of

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ By 2009 the *Transforming Our Theatres Appeal* run by the Royal Shakespeare Company, which closed when the Royal Shakespeare and Swan Theatres re-opened on 24 November 2010, had raised £107.3 million of its £112.8 million target. Figures on the fundraising activities included a grant of £53 million from the National Lottery via Arts Council England (‘The Project’, in *Transforming Our Theatres* <<http://www.rsc.org.uk/transformation/news-promos/1498.asp>> [accessed 3 August 2013], p. 1 of 1). Further detail and discussion of the impact of this transformation is provided on pp. 84-85.

Shakespeare's plays that had undoubtedly been lost in the conditions of the proscenium arch. Addressing audience members in this part of the theatrical space is an aspect of this study since it is here that the combined effect of epic and intimate perspectives is created and the nature of their interconnection is experienced, as the discussions on *Titus Andronicus*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Henry V* and *King Lear* indicate.

In addition to these architectural concerns in relation to audience reception, demographic trends were to become more dependent on external factors such as tourism which are not primarily the result of a particular desire to watch Shakespeare in performance. Nevertheless, Shakespeare remained an important part of the repertoire of the main production houses in Britain and played a significant role in attracting public funding during the New Labour government. Although Dennis Kennedy argues that 'only subsidy, whether state or corporate, keeps Shakespeare regularly on our stages at affordable prices'⁹ he concludes: 'Even when productions of Shakespeare align themselves with dissident positions [...] it has been the humanist and preservationist assumption that Shakespeare holds transcendent value that ultimately grants the grants.'¹⁰ The taxpayer and the consumer pay the subsidies and wages and to some extent this dictates what is produced. As the section on audience theory in this chapter illustrates, this kind of market also influences how it is produced. According to Baz Kershaw, conditions in the subsidised sector are also related to the economic situation in the commercial theatre. He considers that the 'economic out-turn in the 1990s between the London commercial and regional subsidised theatres can be seen as an effect of the global "success" of late

⁹ Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle*, p. 127.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

capitalism',¹¹ although he argues that this did not necessarily benefit local British audiences. A comparison of the ideologies and conditions of both types of institution is therefore useful to the investigation.

Performance relies on a sense of transience that helps to define it as an art form but this is incompatible with the permanent structures in which it is encountered. The Royal National Theatre, for example, provided a complex of three permanent spaces of varying capacity after it moved from its original single proscenium arch site at the Old Vic in 1976. The new building included a wide apron stage in the Olivier, a proscenium arch auditorium in the Lyttelton and an adaptable three-sided thrust space in its studio auditorium the Cottesloe which was yet to be completed. These spaces presented practical and aesthetic problems for mounting productions. The stage designer William Dudley suggests that this kind of architecture was not conducive to aspects of design, playmaking and performance, such as the need for flexibility. Designing for the Olivier leads him to conclude 'just how unyielding it is as a space. Architects seem to want to leave something to posterity. They are very mindful of the permanence of what they do. Stage design is as impermanent as an actor's performance [...] The Olivier is cluttered with too much concrete where you want space to adapt for the changing dynamic of different kinds of shows.'¹² Dudley conveys a sense of the organic nature and process of set design which not only responds to the demands of different kinds of plays but also emphasises the contribution made to performance by creating a distinctive dynamic for each event. This includes establishing a multi-dimensional relationship between

¹¹ Kershaw, *Theatre Ecology: Environments and Performance Events*, p. 175.

¹² William Dudley, interviewed by Mulryne and Shewring, in *Making Space for Theatre*, ed. by Mulryne and Shewring, pp. 97-99 (p. 97).

the play, the players, the whole theatrical space and the audience who occupy it for each production. Dudley continued to demonstrate this inclusive approach in his design concept for Lucy Bailey's *Titus Andronicus* at Shakespeare's Globe over a decade later.

Production history suggests that practitioners were already responding to the need to recreate a sense of impermanence in production in mainstream theatre complexes and this was mainly achieved in their studio spaces. At the Royal Shakespeare Company during the 1970s, for example, productions requiring few permanent design features drew critical attention from the press, notably at The Other Place where Trevor Nunn's production of *Macbeth* received widespread acclaim, as did Buzz Goodbody's *King Lear*. It was the focus on the psychological nature of the drama and the proximity of audience to performer that secured their benchmark status. Terry Hands describes its intended impact on main house practice: 'It was simply a way of allowing the audience to be right on top of a performance, while the actors could work on the kind of detail they would use in television and film. When they performed back on the big stage, we hoped they would be able to carry the experience with them [...] What I think was radical about The Other Place, to us and to the public, was the possibility of doing classics which could be examined in a different way.'¹³ Thus the desire to create different viewing perspectives to suit the texts in particular conditions was not only recognised but also fulfilled.

To trace the further development of modern staging techniques, Buzz Goodbody's *King Lear* in 1974 at The Other Place in Stratford was considered groundbreaking. Colin Chambers's description of the stage is informative:

¹³ Terry Hands, 'Terry Hands interviewed by Christopher J. McCullough', in *The Shakespeare Myth*, ed. by Graham Holderness (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 122-127 (pp. 125-6).

The acting area was empty, except for a few props, like a rug and banners which unfurled when Lear appeared. The gangways in the three-sided auditorium were utilized throughout [...] *Lear* was not seen as epic in terms of great public scenes of wide-open spaces peopled with a huge cast, but in its approach and scope. In fact, its focus was on two families, in which the personal as well as the age differences played a more important part than is usually recognised. Edgar's madness was very much a condition caused by his believing his father had rejected him, and a representation of the social consequences of that, which was what lay at the root of Edmund's climb to power – the driving force of the plot.¹⁴

The influence of this simpler, accessible approach on subsequent stagings, especially those by Richard Eyre in 1997 and Trevor Nunn in 2008 in their indoor spaces, can be made demonstrably clear. The focus on Edmund as the instigator of the tragic action and a figure of misrule is particularly evident. Chambers stresses that the pace of the action for Goodbody's production 'had to be swift, which meant great attention to getting each scene to be true and forceful, and each one to follow the next as if no other could. The audience had to be carried along, step by step, but without their knowing it.'¹⁵ A sense of the colloquial delivery of the text and intimate familiarity with it is implied in this analysis.

By the early 1980s Peter Holland observes that studio theatre had 'increasingly come to be perceived, inside the theatre and without, as the intellectual core of the company's work.'¹⁶ Commitment to experimental staging in smaller venues is evidenced by the subsequent development of the Swan and Courtyard theatres in Stratford. In more open conditions, however, the audience is more actively aware of the pace not only of the play but also itself as contributor to action, as the discussion of performances at Shakespeare's Globe shows, with their pauses to

¹⁴ Colin Chambers, *Other Spaces: New Theatre and the RSC* (London: Eyre Methuen and TQ Publications, 1980), p. 62.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁶ Peter Holland, 'The RSC and Studio Shakespeare', *Essays in Criticism*, 32.3 (1982), 205-218 (p. 206).

accommodate audience laughter or reaction or simply the spectator's gradual assimilation of the scene as it is assembled and begins playing on the stage. This is due, in part, to an increased use of direct address to the spectator from both the *locus* and *platea* areas of the stage by characters such as Edmund and Edgar, but also to other factors such as fragmentation of the audience as a whole - and therefore staggered or contrasting reception of individual moments played on the stage - and its own visibility in the daylight conditions. Playmaking for this audience is a truly multi-perspectival activity. Readings of the text produced in these conditions offer multiple-dimensions.

At the Royal National Theatre, stage designers and directors went further in assessing the aesthetic impact of the different kinds of studio space on interpretation and reception. The comments of the theatre designer Nick Ormerod on the Cottesloe Theatre are informative in this respect:

The Cottesloe provides two things. One, it provides an intimacy (in terms of the distance between the actor and the audience), and two, it provides an epic dimension as well. It's actually a big stage, and the nature of the space and its flexibility allows you to use the theatre in an epic way, but maintaining and intimacy which we believe theatre absolutely requires [...] I suppose it comes down to the size of the stage, but also the height. The height of the Cottesloe helps to give it an epic quality.¹⁷

This height could be used in productions that require a combination of these features, such as tragedy, and is particularly useful for considering Richard Eyre's production of *King Lear* at the Cottesloe. Ormerod also reconsiders the relationship between the spectator and the stage: 'As a designer, I'm not particularly interested in providing a perfect picture for each member of the audience [...] Theatre is a much more three-dimensional form [...] I'm more interested in what the actor is doing. The audience

¹⁷ Nick Ormerod, interviewed by Ronnie Mulryne, in 'Directing, Designing and Theatre Space', in *Making Space for Theatre*, ed. by Mulryne and Shewring, pp. 104-106 (p. 104).

needs to be close in – on top of the actor – to witness this.’¹⁸ The reconfigured audience/performer relationship was used to create fresh perspectives on the text in performance. It challenges the view of the studio as a space that reduces the scale of the action to simple domestic proportions. The example of Eyre’s production, which was designed by Bob Crowley, exemplifies this development.

Richard Eyre’s production of *King Lear*, as his diary account confirms, set out to give the actors and the audience clear points of reference to their own experiences outside the playing space: ‘More and more I think of it as a play about a father being locked out of the house by his children. The fragility of our civilised lives, the terror of destruction of that veneer.’¹⁹ His comments were made in the wider context of a general election, bringing to a close an era of Conservative government that had diminished faith in the family and dismissed the concept of social responsibility out of hand. Eyre saw *King Lear* as ‘a domestic play that has the metaphor of the State laid on top of it. Every family is a state in miniature, that has a ruler and that is the patriarchal ruler, the father. I’m not saying that’s necessarily desirable, that’s just been the historical truth.’²⁰ Eyre’s notes for the first rehearsal offer his vision of the production process, empowering both actor and audience: ‘[T]rust your own knowledge of the world: this is a play about two fathers [...] Everyone is an expert on families [...] Don’t make judgements on the characters. Let us – and the audience – discover what the moral scheme of the play is. Don’t describe anyone as good or evil; let us decide on the basis of their actions.’²¹ The

¹⁹ Richard Eyre, *National Service: Diary of a Decade* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), p. 369.

²⁰ Richard Eyre, ‘*King Lear*: A Director’s View’, BBC Education, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/archive/lear/eyre.shtml>> [accessed 17 November 2000]. No longer available.

²¹ Eyre, *National Service: Diary of a Decade*, p. 369.

choice of venue facilitated his approach. According to Eyre, the popularity of the Cottesloe has ‘much to say about the *absence* of intrusive architectural presence’²² which encourages the focus to lie on people and action and ‘allows the configuration chosen for a particular production to develop its own aesthetic’.²³ However, the Cottesloe ‘does not offer a safe, small, inconspicuous space where risks are cheap.’²⁴ General access to the theatre was created for a particular ideological purpose, according to Iain Mackintosh: ‘The middle level of the galleries is at foyer level. And since the linking stairs between the three levels are within the theatre, everyone aiming to sit at the lower levels must pass through the upper levels, thus removing any feeling of it being a hierarchical layout.’²⁵ Moreover, the space was designed so that ‘to play within this contemporary Cottesloe “cockpit” should be like playing squash in a court with faces lining three walls, or, if one chooses, all four.’²⁶ Trevor Nunn proposes that the Cottesloe space provides ‘a particular intimacy which leads to both a sense of immediacy and danger, and a tangible expectation, to be discovered in performer and audience alike. No pause dies. [...] So conditions [...] are admirable and enviable for everything that benefits from intimacy and interactivity.’²⁷ Bob Crowley’s setting for *King Lear* in traverse, with a greater proportion of the audience very close to the action, incorporated ‘a strong visual and physical contrast between the early interior scenes and Lear’s subsequent self-

²² Richard Eyre, ‘The Cottesloe and the National’, in *The Cottesloe at the National: Infinite Riches in a Little Room*, ed. by Ronnie Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (Stratford-upon-Avon: Mulryne and Shewring, 2000), pp. 43-45 (p. 45).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Iain Mackintosh, ‘The Ideas Behind The Cottesloe’, in *The Cottesloe at the National*, ed. by Mulryne and Shewring, pp. 21-23 (p. 22).

²⁶ Iain Mackintosh, ‘Found Space in a New Building’, in *The Cottesloe at the National*, ed. by Mulryne and Shewring, pp. 25-31 (p. 28).

²⁷ Trevor Nunn, ‘The Cottesloe and the Future’, in *The Cottesloe at the National*, ed. by Mulryne and Shewring, pp. 47- 49 (p. 47).

imposed removal from court and family life'²⁸ according to Ronnie Mulryne and Margaret Shewring. The traverse is an inhospitable playing space in some respects. Viewed end-on it produces the effect of playing within narrow parallel lines that feel both claustrophobic and public. Viewing the action from behind any of these lines demarcating the main playing area it is impossible to ignore the sea of faces across the acting space, either from the audience or on the stage. The overspill of lighting allows the observers in the galleries to be clearly seen. Thus the action and the audience appear more integrated in this configuration.

In the indoor spaces of Lear's kingdom in Eyre's production, the properties and set dressing doubled for the court and Goneril's residence, emphasising the overlap between locations and what happened there. The table used for Lear to hold court in Act 1 Scene 1 became the dinner table to which he came in search of hospitality from his daughter. Both of these events are rituals connected with hierarchical and familial social structures which are disrupted by family argument. Spectacular and inevitably unsupportable verticality was achieved through the use of high walls at either end of the set that 'hinged over in free fall within 40 cm of the front row of the audience'²⁹ at the height of the storm, collapsing to form another horizontal playing platform, with the audience sensing the draught from this cue. The horizontal plane of the stage was elevated for the dual purposes of dramatic effect and accessibility: 'The decision to raise the performance space was taken early on, in order to maintain sightlines for those seated at pit level. A good view of the floor was required, particularly during the hovel scene and for the final scene, where the bodies

²⁸ Ronnie Mulryne and Margaret Shewring, 'Living Spaces: *King Lear*' in *The Cottesloe at the National*, ed. by Mulryne and Shewring, pp. 163-170 (p. 164).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

of Goneril, Regan and eventually Lear himself were piled on a low cart.’³⁰ Free access between performer and spectator was incorporated in the set design.

‘Walkways half way down each side allowed further entrances, and doubled as audience access to the three rows of seating which flanked the floor at pit (lower) level.’³¹ In this way Bob Crowley created an integrated playing and viewing space that was able to present the epic sweep of the action but also allow the audience to observe it in detail. The effect on the actors and the audience clearly indicates a change in acting styles and reception as Ayşegül Yüksel reports in her review of the production on tour: ‘Throughout the play all relations are expressed face to face and heart to heart among actors [...] If audience-wise you are sitting at a good point, during these three hours and a half of the play you can disappear within what’s happening on scene.’³² The physical realisation, on an international scale, of the audience’s growing desire to be part of the action is implied in this view. As artistic director of the entire Royal National Theatre complex Richard Eyre comments on the significance of the audience/actor contract in larger, more vertically inclined auditoria and the need ‘to consider the proper relationship between stage and audience in terms of scale, but also in terms of elevation and incline.’³³ Practitioners therefore clearly reflected on the nature of the audience and the significance of its relationship with the play in these new performance spaces during the final decade of the century, hinting even then at future uses of the vertical areas in the auditorium.

³⁰ Mulryne and Shewring, ‘Living Spaces: *King Lear*’, p. 164.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

³² Ayşegül Yüksel, ‘Face to Face, Heart to Heart with Lear’, *Cumhuriyet*, 28 May 1997. No translator noted. Fax from Martin Fryer, The British Council, Istanbul, to Jenny Mann, Royal National Theatre, London, 28 August 1997, pp.1-4, (p. 3 para 3), Royal National Theatre Archive, London.

³³ Eyre, ‘Space and the Director’, p. 92.

This was particularly necessary in larger spaces in order to develop strategies that would sustain audiences on an economically productive basis.

Andrew Gurr observes: 'Theatre audiences are always affected by the auditorium they occupy.'³⁴ The architectural landscape of theatre in Britain underwent further diversification when Shakespeare's Globe, a permanent outdoor commercial theatre conceived by Sam Wanamaker, opened in 1997. Gurr suggests that an outdoor theatrical space such as Shakespeare's Globe 'prompts the feeling that you are a member of a crowd [...] responding to what is offered you in ways influenced by the other reactions you hear, or see or feel around you'³⁵ whilst 'in the confinement of the enclosed space [...] where you have your own passive sitting space, you can much more easily feel yourself an individual [...] conscious of your identity as a free and perhaps sceptical observer of the events you have paid to witness.'³⁶ As Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper argue, Shakespeare's Globe fulfils a double function 'as both a theatre and an education centre, with experimentation at the heart',³⁷ and it remains the only permanent outdoor theatre in Britain providing a designated space for standing spectators as a yard audience close to the elevated platform stage. Carson notes that the practice in this theatre during its first decade was to 'open up a range of theatrical performance styles to choose from, introducing competition in Shakespearean performance'³⁸ and she argues that it presents a 'radical alternative'³⁹ to that offered by either the Royal Shakespeare

³⁴ Andrew Gurr, 'The Move Indoors', in *Shakespeare in Stages*, ed. by Christine Dymkowski and Christie Carson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 7-21 (p. 7).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare's Globe*, ed. by Carson and Karim-Cooper, pp. 1-12 (p. 7).

³⁸ Christie Carson, 'Democratising the Audience?', in *Shakespeare's Globe*, ed. by Carson and Karim-Cooper, pp. 115-126 (p. 125).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Company or the Royal National Theatre which ‘fundamentally challenges the hierarchical and formal nature of theatre-making in the English tradition.’⁴⁰

Comparisons of production practice between these three theatres therefore produce a range of approaches for creating readings of the plays in performance.

Dennis Kennedy notes that Sam Wanamaker ‘believed that an appropriate way of playing Shakespeare is inscribed in the texts, and that an authentic building with no scenery would create an environment for studying these methods.’⁴¹

Kennedy argues, however, that this was impossible due to changing performance conditions at Shakespeare’s Globe: ‘While the building and its stage force a type of playing different from that in an indoor proscenium playhouse, the playing will be more affected by contemporary theatrical manners.’⁴² The nature of these theatrical manners, from the perspectives of provider and consumer, invites closer analysis in order to discover what role they play in shaping performance. Compared with other spaces such as the Olivier Theatre or the Courtyard Theatre, Shakespeare’s Globe is by no means a space devoid of paradigmatic features that suggest its function. As the site of a reconstructed interpretation of an original design that is not The Globe but another theatre it has several obtrusive features. Its sloping thatched roof draws attention downwards towards the central well of the auditorium, which includes both the yard and the stage, thereby dividing the spectator’s focus between them. Three tiered seating galleries offer a predominantly vertical perspective to actors and audience in daylight conditions. A canopy which is part of the stage construction obscures the upstage areas for some of the audience in the upper gallery. Pillars on

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle*, p. 108.

⁴² *Ibid.*

the stage supporting the canopy also disrupt sightlines in the yard and all of the galleries. These features require counterbalances in terms of stage blocking.

As the performance analysis of Lucy Bailey's *Titus Andronicus* shows, the reconstructed Globe can be a problematic site in which to consider the dramatic structures embedded in the text unless the dominant aspects of its own architectural structure, such as the distinctions between the playing and reception spaces of the yard, the galleries and the fringes of the raised platform stage area, are either disguised or incorporated into the fabric of the overall design concept by the director. The sense of audience inclusion developed in these conditions provides a striking contrast to the deliberately alienating Japanese production at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre directed by Yukio Ninagawa for a proscenium arch audience viewing the action from a darkened auditorium for the majority of the performance. The comparison of these two productions is justified by the productive problems each of them present to the playing conditions. They provide just one example of how very different directorial approaches can be considered. Further productions of different plays will compare the experiences of performance in other locations, such as the Olivier and Courtyard Theatres for *Henry V* in order to consider the impact of funding or the use of larger and smaller auditoria, or Shakespeare's Globe and the Courtyard Theatre for *Love's Labour's Lost* to consider the impact of traditional or modern staging in the indoor and outdoor space. Each of these auditoria present different kinds of difficulties in terms of accommodating particular aspects of performance.

The literary critical landscape of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

In the mid-1980s Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield argued that the ‘break-up of consensus in British political life’⁴³ during the previous decade had been ‘accompanied by the break-up of traditional assumptions about the values and goals of literary criticism.’⁴⁴ They believed that a ‘combination of historical and cultural context, theoretical method, political commitment and textual analysis’⁴⁵ was beneficial to literary analytical practice. Materialism is defined by them in these terms:

[I]t insists that culture does not (cannot) transcend the material forces and relations of production. Culture is not simply a reflection of the economic and political system, but nor can it be independent of it. Cultural materialism therefore sees texts as inseparable from the conditions of their production and reception in history; and as involved, necessarily in the making of cultural meanings which are always, finally, political meanings.⁴⁶

Theoretically, then, more perspectives on the texts could be developed if the plays were considered in the contexts of the material conditions in which they came to exist in the recent past of the late twentieth century. If the political and cultural conditions of production are incorporated into literary analysis, the meanings of the text are expanded, since they are subject to change and development in relation to the times in which they are read and performed. In her assessment of Shakespeare’s dramaturgy Jean E. Howard highlights why and how this could be achieved from a

⁴³ Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, ‘Foreword to the First Edition: Cultural Materialism’, in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Dollimore and Sinfield, 2nd edn, pp. vii-viii (p. vii).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, ‘Foreword: Cultural Materialism’, in *The Shakespeare Myth*, ed. by Graham Holderness (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. ix-x (p. ix).

performance perspective. The role of the audience becomes part of her appraisal of the contexts of production and their impact on the plays:

Shakespeare realised that in the theatre an audience responds not just to the logic or images of dramatic speech, but to all the elements of a three-dimensional stage event [...] he consciously or intuitively developed strategies and techniques for shaping the three-dimensional event to make the greatest emotional and intellectual impact upon the spectators.⁴⁷

She argues that Shakespeare was ‘writing with an eye to the potential responses of the audience; that is, as he orchestrated the play, he was indirectly orchestrating the theatrical experience of the viewer.’⁴⁸ She shows that the methods of making meaning are not only deliberately incorporated in the text, but also that the conditions of reception are closely linked with those methods. This forms the basis of the investigative approach to Act Two of Lucy Bailey’s *Titus Andronicus* and also Dominic Dromgoole’s blocking of the Dover Beach scene in *King Lear* in this thesis.

More recently, Presentist critical approaches have reinforced the need to make sense of the plays in the contexts of the present rather than the past. Ewan Fernie argues that ‘Shakespeare, in particular, is primarily a contemporary dramatist and writer, because he is taught, read and performed on a global scale unmatched by any other author. With respect to new historicism this means that he is more embedded in our modern world than he ever was in the Renaissance.’⁴⁹ From this perspective, international productions of Shakespeare which are performed to a wider audience also broadens the scope for producing meanings from the plays from a variety of cultural, social and political perspectives. Traditional readings of popular

⁴⁷ Howard, *Shakespeare’s Art of Orchestration*, p. 3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁹ Ewan Fernie, ‘Shakespeare and the Prospect of Presentism’, *Shakespeare Survey* 58 (2005), 169-184 (p. 175). In educational terms, access to Shakespeare appeared to be increasingly difficult. Further information on this topic is given on p. 69 and in Appendix B.

plays could be challenged in this way. Educational practice for 16-19 year-olds in Britain developed more kinaesthetic approaches for studying Shakespeare, such as reflection on the contexts of production, the particular methods used to stage the performance and audience reception over time.⁵⁰ However, in general, the education system had not necessarily increased access to Shakespeare.⁵¹ Reflections on the nuances of the text produced in performances of the recent past were suggested as a valuable area for critical analysis. Terence Hawkes argues:

Placing emphasis on the present can't help but connect fruitfully with the current realignment of critical responses that stresses the performances of a play as much as its 'reference': that looks at what a play *does*, here and now in the theatre, as well as – or even against – what it *says* in terms of the world to which its written text refers.⁵²

This enables a more holistic approach to be developed for considering the text in the circumstances of its performance, using what David Fuller has described as more reading 'surfaces'.⁵³

⁵⁰ Assessment Objective 4 (A04), for example, from the *OCR AS/A Level GCE English Literature Specification* for the A2 F663: *Drama and Poetry pre-1800, Section A: Shakespeare* study unit, requires students to 'demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.' (*OCR AS/A Level GCE English Literature Specification, OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE in English Literature H071* [and] *OCR Advanced GCE in English Literature H471 Version 4 – September 2013*

<<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/75115-specification.pdf>> [accessed 3 August 2013], 1-57 (p. 23)).

⁵¹ I am grateful to Dr Deana Rankin for the discussion on this point. The Boyden Report notes that several factors accounted for the lack of attendance of a younger audience demographic, including education: 'Over the last 20 years, the fragmentation of culture into complex and difficult to reach social groups has made it harder for the theatre to attract and retain the attention of young people. Electronic popular culture forms reaching large audiences at low consumption costs threaten the core audience for live performance of all kinds. At the same time, changes in the education system have meant that fewer people leave school with a knowledge and affection for the core texts [...]. For many young people, theatre is no longer a natural part of the process of tribal self-definition and cultural reinforcement which drives leisure choices.' (The Boyden Report, (p. 17)). Legislation relating to education prior to and subsequent to this report suggests an increasingly narrow access to academic study of Shakespeare, either at school or in higher education. For further information about the role of Shakespeare in the curriculum and academic access to the texts over this period see Appendix B.

⁵² Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present*, p. 5.

⁵³ David Fuller, unpublished paper given at a seminar on *The Life in Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Royal Holloway, University of London, 6 March 2009.

As Terence Hawkes remarks, Presentism ‘highlights what has been termed drama’s “performative” function: a feature that always operates concurrently with, and perhaps as a modification of, its referential function. The effect of that realignment is to sophisticate and expand our notion of performing, and to refocus interest on what the early modern theatre meant by the activity it termed “playing”.’⁵⁴ Playing suggests an interactive, continuous experience in which power is continually shifting between participants. It also redefines acting to some extent as an activity which uses the enactment of the text as a more inclusive event that is shared with the audience. Hawkes describes how playing ‘evidently embraced a far broader spectrum of activity, both on the stage and in the audience, than appears to modern eyes’⁵⁵ and he goes on to suggest how the term “play” [...] in its fifteenth and sixteenth century context, included the vast unsystematised and often non-verbal range of communicative traffic always evident in the here-and-now immediacy that binds performer to audience.’⁵⁶ The paralinguistic language of the text is thus identified as part of the process of conveying meaning. The interest in terms of analysis lies in the diverse rather than uniform effects that can be achieved under the range of performance conditions of the recent past. These effects reconfigure the nature and uses of audience and actor contact in a variety of audience/actor encounters within the performance. They are useful for establishing not only the nuances but also the ambiguities that create tension in the auditorium.

⁵⁴ Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present*, p. 5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Performance criticism and the contract between the audience and the actor.

Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes also foresaw the productive analytical possibilities of closer interaction between literary and theatrical critical disciplines, including performance, in that:

each of them makes possible a fuller engagement with the ironies generated by our inescapable involvement in time [...] they also point, as irony must, to layers and shades of implication, suddenly available here and now within the *plays*, subtly challenging, changing and adding our sense of what they are able to tell us.⁵⁷

Whilst consideration of audience reception has always been a crucial aspect of the staging process for theatre practitioners, more detailed critical discussion of the composition, expectation, function and experience of the spectator enables expansion of the dimensions of the relationships between the audience and the actor.

Consideration of the audience in both outdoor and indoor conditions in commercial and subsidised theatres shows the extent to which the theatregoing experience is interactive or remains passive. Three main areas of performance criticism are of interest to the task of combining a literary and theatrical approach to performances of the plays in Britain between 1997 and 2008: discussion of the impact of tourist culture on performance; research into the close interaction between actor and audience and the uses of the *locus* and *platea* areas which are implicit in the plays and which have been exploited productively in recent productions of Shakespeare.

Analysis of the audiences at Shakespeare's Globe and at Stratford-upon-Avon in particular has been closely linked with the impact of tourism on performance.

Susan Bennett, for example, considers that Shakespeare's Globe 'developed in response to patterns of tourism rather than patterns of theatregoing and this makes for

⁵⁷ Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes, 'Introduction: Presenting Presentism', in *Presentist Shakespeares* ed. by Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1-5 (p. 5).

quite a different performance-spectator contact.⁵⁸ Theatregoing as part of a tourist package, according to Bennett, is likely to be focused on ‘popular spectacular theatrical productions tied to particular tourist destinations’⁵⁹ such as London or Stratford, which has obvious influence on the selection of Shakespearean plays for production and the ways in which Shakespeare is marketed, produced and received. In exploring the impact of the tourist audience on performance Kennedy identifies similarities between the visitor and the spectator and suggests that these activities elicit a particular kind of engagement with their environments that distances them from the action:

Spectators at performances have much in common with tourists [...] As travellers approach a touristic site, so spectators encounter a performance through the gaze which implies a distance of subject to object. Both tourists and spectators are temporary visitors to another realm [...] If they have psychological or other investment in the event, it is normally limited to a ludic complicity.⁶⁰

Current research shows that complicity can take a range of different forms in both outdoor and indoor spaces and that rather than limiting response, the performance is enriched by this kind of activity. Examples of these reactions can be observed in Lucy Bailey’s *Titus Andronicus*, Michael Boyd’s *Henry V* or Gregory Doran’s production of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Suggesting that the audience ‘attend the Globe specifically so that they can assist at the spectacle’,⁶¹ Kennedy does not provide details of the configuration of the audience in the theatre in relation to any particular event, nor does he discuss in detail, by taking account of the same play in different spaces, the very complex ways in which the spectator can be asked to engage with

⁵⁸ Susan Bennett, ‘Shakespeare on Vacation’, in *A Companion to Shakespeare in Performance*, ed. by Barbara Hodgdon and William Worthen (London: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 495-507 (p. 499).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 507.

⁶⁰ Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle*, p. 94.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

the performance of individual scenes or moments within scenes, as the discussions of *Titus Andronicus* and *Love's Labour's Lost* in this thesis show. He does not consider in more particular detail how directors overcome the problems created by the distance between subject and object in the touristic approach to performance. For example, the yard audience at Shakespeare's Globe is composed of individuals in a variety of standing situations and locations, and institutional health and safety regulations prevent them from being seated. This means that the spectator's situation changes moment by moment throughout the performance; a useful tool for the director, actor and other audience members that can be employed to build or diffuse particular relationships between the actors and the spectators expressly for the purpose of making meaning from the text. The blocking of movement in *Titus Andronicus*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *King Lear* at Shakespeare's Globe provides an ideal example of this idea.

Whilst acknowledging that the continuing production of Shakespeare has become more dependent on tourism, the audience in mainstream British theatre appears to remain predominantly educated, white and middle class. Kennedy notes that visitors to the Globe are in a broad sense 'cultural tourists',⁶² who may not be seeking the experience of watching a play. In some senses the audience could be described as transient since they may or may not return to the theatrical space over time or develop expectations of what a particular institution will be offering in terms of performance. Nevertheless, attempts are made to extend the reach of production to audiences who have not necessarily encountered Shakespeare's work before. Carson notes that 'Shakespeare at the Globe is seen as a

⁶² Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle*, p. 105.

popular playwright and the work is approached in a way that retells stories for a new audience.’⁶³ The ways in which this is achieved are not confined to the delivery of the spoken text. Other elements of performance, some of which refer to original practice such as musical interludes, the creation of the conditions of misrule or jigs and dances at the end of the play, are sometimes included. This has the effect of dissipating expected reactions to tragedy in particular. Furthermore, the tourist status of the individual or groups of spectators necessarily changes conventional notions of social hierarchies, as Dennis Kennedy observes. In the capacity of tourist ‘the visitor [to the Globe] is in a curious social position. The historical reference of the building and its project of producing Shakespeare suggest a high art appeal with all the attendant class implications [....] Yet in the Globe’s institutional practice, history, Shakespeare and authenticity are wrapped up in a consumerist package that implies the abolition of class.’⁶⁴ This complicates perceptions of the Globe as a democratic space that is, as a result of its reduced ticket prices or the emphasis on its location as an educative or experimental site, accessible to a wider audience. Analysis of audience response in the recent present therefore needs to bear these points in mind.

How far modern performance inhibits rather than embraces audience response has been debated further by developing research on audience reaction. In his discussion of applause, for example, Baz Kershaw traces the ‘growing poverty of permissible response as a shift in most Western theatres from the audience as *patron*, to *client*, to *customer*.’⁶⁵ He considers the ways in which audiences ‘have

⁶³ Carson, ‘Democratising the Audience?’, p. 122.

⁶⁴ Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle*, p. 111.

⁶⁵ Baz Kershaw, ‘Oh, for unruly audiences! Or, Patterns of Participation in Twentieth Century Theatre’, *Modern Drama*, 42.2 (2001), 133-146 (p. 135).

increasingly been prevented from becoming unruly'⁶⁶, suggesting that 'this may be a measure of the disempowerment of both audiences and the communities they may represent.'⁶⁷ This complicates analysis of the role of the spectator as either active or passive or both simultaneously, suggesting that at least part of the impetus behind the audience's response lies in the increased emphasis on theatregoing as a consumer-driven activity. Kershaw argues that the 'power of performance may be sucked dry by the peripherals of theatre as it is transformed into a service industry with subsidiary retail outlets.'⁶⁸ As the discussion of Trevor Nunn's *King Lear* at Stratford shows, this has had an effect on developing the themes or narrative arcs of the plays in performance to some extent, sometimes resulting in reactions that would traditionally be considered more appropriate for comedy.

In his consideration of historical productions in the sixteenth century Stephen Greenblatt suggests that Shakespearean theatre 'depends upon a *felt* community: there is no dimming of lights, no attempt to isolate and awaken the sensibilities of each individual member of the audience, no sense of disappearance in the crowd.'⁶⁹ However, theatrical experimentation and performance analysis in the twenty-first century have proved that involving the individual within the group can help to form an understanding of how effective the text is in making meanings in performance. Carson notes that in the reconstructed space of Shakespeare's Globe the audience 'is a divided group, not a uniform mass, and is addressed as such.'⁷⁰ As a divided group the audience has a variety of experiences of a play that derive from its multi-

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁶⁹ Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*, repr. edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), p. 5.

⁷⁰ Carson, 'Democratising the Audience?', p. 119.

perspectival consumption of the text in the conditions of live performance.

Furthermore, she argues that at Shakespeare's Globe 'the idea of going to the theatre prepared to become involved in the meaning-making process stands in contrast to a view of the audience as standing outside the performance trying desperately to understand.'⁷¹ A combination of staging methods, including blocking, design and delivery of the text that take into account different audience needs and the ways in which they are fulfilled is part of the process for making meaning in performance. Mark Rylance, for example, describes how he would advise actors to engage with the audience: 'Don't speak *to* them, don't speak *for* them, speak *with* them, play *with* them.'⁷² To discover whether this is also true for an indoor audience, a comparison of actor/audience interactions in different productions of the same play performed in outdoor and indoor conditions also becomes an analytical tool.

Analysis of the actor/audience relationship in the theatrical space is a crucial part of interpreting how the play's text makes meaning. In 2005 Bridget Escolme observes that 'the relationship between the audience and the fictional figure each actor portrays is rarely seen as productive of that figure's meaning',⁷³ and she went on to investigate 'how the meaning produced by the shifting distance between performer and audience might be constitutive of the ways in which the plays produce meaning.'⁷⁴ She argues that '[a]wkward, unpredictable as well as easy, conventionalised encounters between performer and audience'⁷⁵ are an intentional

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁷² Mark Rylance, interviewed by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper in 'Research, Materials, Craft: Principles of Performance at Shakespeare's Globe', in *Shakespeare's Globe*, ed. by Carson and Karim-Cooper, pp. 103-114, (p. 107).

⁷³ Bridget Escolme, *Talking To The Audience: Shakespeare, Performance, Self* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

part of Shakespeare's texts and that 'the unpredictability of our reactions – the multiplicity of our readings, the uncertainties of our pleasure and support – are integral to the readings that the plays make possible.'⁷⁶ The soliloquies of Berowne and Henry V exemplify how language is used to present multiple perspectives on character that complicate both the meanings of the text and the audience's response to it. Mark Rylance's comments on the effects of soliloquy illustrate how this can be achieved. When the actor is alone on the stage the audience 'become your conscience or your soul. A soliloquy suggests that the character speaking has divided into two so the audience becomes that part of you that is so silent and very rarely speaks back, that you long for some guidance from.'⁷⁷ The discussion of the uses of soliloquy in *Love's Labour's Lost*, *King Henry V* and *King Lear* in subsequent chapters develops understanding of the dramatic construction and purpose of these speeches when considered from the perspective of where on the stage, by whom and in what conditions within the performance the words are delivered and received.

Weimann's exploration of the relationship between *locus* and *platea* in the Elizabethan theatre is instructive when the changing playing conditions of Shakespeare performance in the early twenty-first century are considered. He describes their interdependent function thus: 'What is involved [...] is not the *confrontation* of the world and time of the play with that of the audience, or any serious *opposition* between representational and non-representational standards of acting, but the most intense *interplay* of both.'⁷⁸ An example of how such interplay between the audience and the actor can be observed in comic structure and language

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷⁷ Mark Rylance, interviewed by Carson and Karim-Cooper, in *Shakespeare's Globe*, ed. by Carson and Karim-Cooper, 107.

⁷⁸ Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*, ed. by Schwartz, pp. 80-81.

is presented in the discussion of the dramatic significance of Berowne's interaction with the lords in *Love's Labour's Lost* in the Courtyard Theatre. Stephen Purcell describes how in the *locus* area 'characters would be presented without direct reference to the world of the audience, and would often be of high social status',⁷⁹ and he argues that 'the *platea* register serves as a means of destabilising the discourses of the *locus*.'⁸⁰ The interaction between the country characters and the courtiers in *Love's Labour's Lost* exemplifies this idea. Furthermore, the theatrical conditions of the recent present provide the audience with the opportunity to have much closer contact with what it perceives to be the star of the play or its lead actor, who often plays the role of a character of high rank. This places a significant stress on the actor to make contact with the audience, drawing the character further into the *platea* and creating disruption through disorientation of the audience as the perspective used for viewing the character in the *locus* shifts. As the analysis of Berowne's exchanges with both Costard and the lords in *Love's Labour's Lost* shows, the suggestions for how the interaction between these characters is developed can be detected in the written text. It is achieved in performance by considering a range of visual perspectives, including the development of spatial relationships on the horizontal plane of the stage and the use of the vertical and mid-air spaces above it.

Economic and artistic conditions in theatrical institutions between 1997 and 2008.

Michael Billington suggests that 'theatre in the Nineties undeniably reflected the culture at large in that it saw the dissolution of the collective ethos and the growth of

⁷⁹ Stephen Purcell, *Popular Shakespeare* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 19.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

peripatetic individualism. It also witnessed the rise of small-scale theatres that had no defined public role.⁸¹ Theatres such as the Almeida and the Donmar Warehouse offered ‘a small seating capacity, an enterprising directorate and an indefinable air of glamour. Depending heavily on private finance, they were the perfect products of the post-Thatcherite era’⁸² and surely influenced by capitalist small business models which encouraged entrepreneurial approaches to developing theatrical companies rather than reliance on subsidy. The effect of this was an increase in freelance work across the media platforms which facilitated the sharing of good practice between theatres. Billington suggests that whereas ‘in the past it had been companies and buildings that possessed a defining aesthetic, now that was something imported by individual directors’,⁸³ and he notes ‘the impact of freelance culture on the theatrical ecology.’⁸⁴ In the latter part of the twentieth century actors were, and remained, itinerant and comparatively few directors had residencies. The employment culture in the theatre was linked with film and television because this was much more lucrative than theatre work and required less commitment in terms of time. The underlying effect of this reshaping of the socio-economic structure of the creative workforce shows how far other media began to influence not only how, when and where productions were staged, but also which productions were staged and who was responsible for casting and directing them. This increased movement of practitioners between the theatre, film and television was productive in that some theatrical events

⁸¹ Michael Billington, *State of the Nation*, p. 342.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* Ian McDiarmid who ran the Almeida with Jonathan Kent was an established actor in mainstream theatres such as the Royal Shakespeare Company and at the Royal Exchange Theatre where he worked with Michael Grandage who was also to become a guest director at the Almeida. Grandage had raised the profile of regional theatre as Artistic Director of Sheffield Theatres before running the Donmar Warehouse to great critical acclaim. Cross-fertilisation of skills was therefore evidenced between mainstream and smaller-scale theatre prior to Blair’s rise to power as well as during the administration of his government.

were given a wider audience through film projects and became popularised. Kenneth Branagh's Renaissance Films Company, for example, was ultimately responsible for film interpretations of *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. Tom Stoppard created a fictional account of Shakespeare's life at the Globe in *Shakespeare in Love* and presented its narrative using filmic techniques which allowed the audience to experience a Shakespeare play in a way that facilitated, through mediatised representation, the breaking of the boundaries of *locus* and *platea* which were offered in live performance. Each of these films also popularised classical acting for a mass audience.

Between 1997 and 2008 the management structures of the major theatrical institutions staging Shakespeare in Britain were in flux. This is reflected in the staging and reception of performances mounted by them. In 1997 Mark Rylance, an actor with experience including major roles for the Royal Shakespeare Company, became the first artistic director at Shakespeare's Globe. By 2006 the theatre had appointed its second artistic director Dominic Dromgoole, whose strengths lay in producing work for smaller alternative fringe venues, developing raw talent. In his view Shakespeare's Globe is 'an inclusive space and therefore well suited to plays dealing with struggles for democracy.'⁸⁵ He thus fostered an interest in political aspects of the plays and their relevance to an audience in the present that is congruent with cultural materialist critical perspectives. Shakespeare's Globe is presented, according to Dromgoole, as 'an egalitarian performance area. Everybody is lit, everybody is aware of each other and actors share the experience with the

⁸⁵ Jeremy Miles, interviewing Dominic Dromgoole, in 'Dromgoole at the Globe', in *Plays International*, 22.7 (2007), 18-20 (p. 18).

audience.’⁸⁶ These comments highlight the changing relationship between the play and the audience and reflect the growing emphasis on the audience’s involvement in the experience of performance. Presenting the plays in seasons has also become an established feature of texts staged at the Globe and they help to shape audience reaction even before performance. Reading the performance of *Titus Andronicus* as part of *The Edges of Rome* season in 2006, for example, invites consideration of the epic and spectacular aspects of the play, but also its marginal spaces in which the boundaries of the action are tested to their limit and can be expressed and experienced as both tragedy and comedy. Similarly, the *Renaissance and Revolution* season of 2007, during which *Love’s Labour’s Lost* was staged, juxtaposes notions of cultural elegance and disruption that seeks political change.

The Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford-upon-Avon, having withdrawn from its London base, needed to re-establish cutting-edge productions of Shakespeare’s texts for global audiences that had secured its artistic success in the 1960s. Under the artistic directorship of Michael Boyd it aimed to achieve this through a return to innovative staging techniques. These included the use of vertical spaces above the stage that had created some of its classic productions, including those of Peter Brook in the 60s and 70s. As David Hare notes of the general post-war theatrical landscape there was an intense interest in class struggle in productions undertaken in this period and ‘in the productions of the best British Brechtian directors, the questions about what was the social status of the characters and what was the nature of the class transaction going on between the characters

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

produced some very great work.’⁸⁷ This analytical perspective could also be used to consider character and performance in the new century. Eventual shifts in architectural practice which transformed the Royal Shakespeare Theatre⁸⁸, bringing the audience closer to events on the stage, enhanced the reversion to Brechtian models of production and coincided with the destabilisation of the social and political landscape as the result of the outcomes of the war in Iraq and increased terrorist activity in the United Kingdom. The effects of these events were to be reflected in Boyd’s staging of *Henry V* as part of *The Histories*, a cycle of Shakespeare’s history plays, as his comments in public discussions of the productions make clear. The analysis of *Henry V* in this investigation discusses his consideration of the effect of contemporary political events taking place in the modern political arena on shaping the production.

During this period both Shakespeare’s Globe and the Royal Shakespeare Company had the capacity to investigate and demonstrate diverse approaches to actor/audience relationships in performance. Shakespeare’s Globe is primarily an experimental building dedicated to producing Shakespeare’s plays mostly in daylight conditions in which, as has been documented, the audience can freely observe itself. In these conditions some spectators are not only standing but also mobile and able to relocate themselves during performance. These factors allow productively unpredictable audience interaction with the actors on the stage and in the auditorium.

⁸⁷ David Hare, interviewed by Richard Eyre, in *Talking Theatre: Interviews with Theatre People*, ed. by Richard Eyre (London: Nick Hern Books, 2009), pp. 183-191 (p. 185).

⁸⁸ By 2006 the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company’s main house, was scheduled for redevelopment and the company moved to the temporary Courtyard Theatre: a thrust stage that broke with the conventions of the traditional proscenium arch and required radical changes in the ways that production was conceived and received. A fuller discussion of the scale impact of the Royal Shakespeare’s *Transforming Our Theatres* project which included building the Courtyard Theatre as a prototype for the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon is outlined on pp. 83-84.

The Royal National Theatre, controversially rejecting main house presentation of the classics in favour of production in the Cottesloe, produced *King Lear* to critical acclaim in 1997 on a traverse stage that intentionally gave its seated audience close access to the action. Similarly, the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford, having had the most experience of presenting Shakespeare's plays in intimate staging conditions continued to provide productions in its smaller performance space, the Swan, that were to inform its practices in the main house. These practices can be analysed in order to establish how performances were subsequently developed for main stage spaces and in what ways they might illuminate structural dimensions of the written texts for readers in the present.

The institutional ideology of the Royal National Theatre continued to support wide public access for artistic and financial reasons. In his Director's Review in 1996 Richard Eyre summarises the National's objective: 'It is an article of faith for us that we make an effort to engage as wide an audience as possible with our work'.⁸⁹ The effect of financial input into the theatre infrastructure by the lottery rather than government funding prompted the shift towards a mixed economic theatrical ecology that was to have an effect on productions and audiences. According to Eyre it meant that the theatre management had been 'obliged to examine and question the way we put on our productions, the way we present ourselves to the public, and the way we treat the public when they enter the building [....] We are pledged to find more ways of making the National more accessible to more people [...] above all through the quality and nature of the work that appears on our stages.'⁹⁰ Although grant income

⁸⁹ Richard Eyre, 'Director's Review', in the *Royal National Theatre Annual Review 1995/6*, Royal National Theatre Archive, London, (p. 3).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

provided 39% of total revenue, matched by 35.9% provided by box office receipts⁹¹ in 1997, Eyre's successor Trevor Nunn comments that staff had identified 'the importance of widening our accessibility as an urgent priority.'⁹² As artistic director Nunn reflects: 'I want the National to be known as the Theatre for Everyone',⁹³ but he also links this with economic necessity. 'While, regardless of hue, the Government policy of what is misleadingly termed "standstill funding" persists, these aims and objectives [...] will be threatened as we are forced to appeal to the private sector not to partner us in providing additional projects, but to help us to stay in existence.'⁹⁴ By the time Nicholas Hytner took over from Trevor Nunn in 2003, staging plays in more open conditions for lower prices was to become one way of achieving higher attendance figures and providing a more accessible experience for a greater part of the audience. This was partially achieved through private subsidy.

On the Olivier stage at the Royal National Theatre, Peter Reynolds and Lee White describe how traditional box-set design concepts were replaced by a 'found space aesthetic'⁹⁵ for *Henry V*, Nicholas Hytner's first production as artistic director in 2003. For this approach the Olivier would be 'stripped back to its bare architectural form.'⁹⁶ Reynolds and White note that this was partly determined by the 'relatively low production budgets for all the productions scheduled as part of Hytner's £10 (Travelex) season of plays'⁹⁷ which aimed to attract younger audiences

⁹¹ Figures from 'Reaching Out', in *Royal National Theatre Annual Report 1997/8*, Royal National Theatre Archive, p. 40.

⁹² Trevor Nunn, Director's Review in 'Reaching Out', p. 3.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Peter Reynolds and Lee White, Rehearsal Diary for Nicholas Hytner's production of *Henry V* at the Royal National Theatre

<<http://www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=6017&Document%252FChapter%252F@id=10.html>> [accessed 10 February 2013] (para.1 of 2).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

through reduced ticket prices. This production method of opening the stage space up emphasised the broad horizontal plane of the Olivier's apron stage, which in turn affected blocking and interaction between characters, especially monarchs and their subjects. This kind of staging became increasingly favoured as the conditions of production in the Olivier from 2003, which resulted in different dimensions of the text emerging from performances of the classics, of which *Henry V* is one example. The demand was for major characters to become more accessible to the audience. The staging of this production presented aspects of Henry's character as a man and a king which come into conflict during the play. A new market clearly existed for such production techniques. In addition, the economic needs of the theatre required it to attempt to satisfy the demand to see plays mounted in this way in a larger space that remained accessible for an audience situated further away from the stage and potentially further from contact with the action that took place on it. Hytner's use of media in his productions was an attempt to bridge this space. These changes in technique were to have a lasting impact on production practice, in particular setting the scene for ensemble playing.

The clearest transformation of staging practice took place at the Royal Shakespeare Company where the proscenium arch Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford was demolished and the raised thrust stage of the Courtyard Theatre. This new stage was comparable in some respects to the raised platform of the outdoor auditorium of Shakespeare's Globe and created a temporary acting space that was physically and emotionally more exposing for the actors as they interpreted their characters in performance. The Courtyard was funded by the National Lottery via Arts Council England and designed by Ian Ritchie Architects. It opened in July 2006

and was described by the Royal Shakespeare Company as a prototype for the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre: ‘The thrust stage auditorium, where the audience are seated on three sides of the action, will form the basis of the new auditorium for the transformed Royal Shakespeare Theatre. In the new configuration 86% of the audience will sit within 10 metres of the stage, compared to the original Royal Shakespeare Theatre which has only 26% of its seats within 10 metres of the stage.’⁹⁸

It required radical changes in the ways productions were staged. It reconfigured seating within the auditorium with ‘wrap around stalls, two galleries [and] 1,030 seats, grouped in blocks of about 200 instead of 1,350’⁹⁹, according to David Ward. In this space the audience was not only divided into smaller groups but physically closer to the stage and could observe the interaction between characters in far greater detail from its position, aided by the predominantly dark auditorium which draws attention towards the light focused on the raised platform area. This would have a particular effect on approaches to staging characters previously observed from a distance, such as the represented figure of the sovereign. One example of this is *Henry V* directed by Michael Boyd in 2007. In this ensemble production the fullest possible use was made of the whole auditorium, where the vertical spaces above the stage and spectators were spectacularly punctuated and intersected by visual activity. Staging practices on the thrust also had an impact on comic action. Actors became more susceptible to the effects of proximity to the audience and also to the many varieties of audience laughter in response to the delivery of the written text that a play such as *Love’s Labour’s Lost* evokes.

⁹⁸ The Royal Shakespeare Company, ‘Transforming Our Theatres: The Project Phase 1’, <<http://www.rsc.org.uk/transformation/project/693.asp>> [accessed 3 August 2013] (para 4 of 5).

⁹⁹ David Ward, ‘Transforming Our Theatres: The Vision. Interview with David Ward’, <<http://www.rsc.org.uk/transformation/vision/540.asp>> [accessed 3 August 2013] (para 5 of 15).

In summary, this chapter endeavours to establish the political, social, economic and cultural conditions in which the productions analysed were developed. The overview of the literary and theatrical critical landscape leading up to and during the period under discussion shows the potentially productive aspects of a combined approach to analysing aspects of Shakespeare's plays. The practical application of this methodology should expand current knowledge of the texts. Knowledge of the developments taking place in the different institutions and their ideologies reveals an increasing awareness of the need to address the audience in a more inclusive environment by paying greater attention to details of the written text. The ways in which this was achieved and what it tells us about Shakespeare's dramaturgy forms the basis of the subsequent investigative case studies of the thesis.

Chapter Four.

Titus Andronicus: 'Ha ha ha!' (3.1.263)

This chapter discusses director-led relationships between the actor and the audience established during the performance of *Titus Andronicus* in order to demonstrate how the play's distinctive fusion of black comedy and tragic catastrophe is initiated and sustained over time. Two productions of the play using contrasting conceptual approaches were staged in 2006: Lucy Bailey's naturalistic interpretation directed for Shakespeare's Globe as part of the theatre's *The Edges of Rome* season and Yukio Ninagawa's abstract staging at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon for the *Complete Works Festival*.

Titus Andronicus is transformed into a spectacular event when it is performed on the stage. James Hirsh describes it as 'an early experiment in the disruption of an audience's stock responses'¹ and he suggests that it 'dramatises the impossibility of finding appropriate responses to certain situations.'² The theatrical conditions of the recent past, especially daylight performance where a disruptive audience can observe its own behaviour, are compatible with the intentionally unpredictable and unstable nature of the play's dramatic action. These reactions are fostered in theatrical spaces that facilitate closer interaction between the audience and the play during performance for particular purposes. Laughter at grotesque horror in tragedy at inappropriate moments, for example, becomes a useful tool for creating instability and also dramatic tension. Institutional practices during this time have also paid greater attention to the stagecraft embedded in the play's stage directions. In addition, the consequence of blurring traditional generic distinctions between tragedy

¹ James Hirsh, 'Laughter at *Titus Andronicus*', *Essays in Theatre*, 71 (1988), 59-74 (p. 60).

² *Ibid.*

and comedy has been to allow the spectator to view the play from fresh perspectives that reveal its cohesive and coercive features. This approach has been valuable for attracting the widest possible audience; an audience who attends the theatre to see a spectacular event and feels compelled to view the outcome of such action.

Titus Andronicus is a bloodthirsty and ostensibly irrational tragedy written at the height of the English Renaissance, during which time the vernacular flourished. These cultural developments were accompanied by the rise of Protestantism in a politically and spiritually difficult environment. Henry's VIII's daughter Elizabeth had been brought up in a world which shed political and religious blood over the form in which the Bible was written and read. Lavinia and Titus, another father and daughter caught up in the violent pace of political change, however, experience the brutal curtailment of verbal and physical expression. In this way attention is focused on the physical and emotional trauma of the individual as a result of political chaos. The case study discusses scenes that are the most problematic for the director to stage, the actor to play and the audience to encounter. The opening sequence of Act 1 Scene 1 shows how conflicting responses to disrupted public rituals are evoked in the audience. This information is linked with analysis of subsequent action in the forest in Act 2 Scene 4, during which Lavinia's mutilation is discovered in the woods by Titus's brother Marcus, who produces an overtly rhetorical response to her situation. Consideration is then given to the staging methods used by each director at the turning point of the play in Act 3 Scene 1 when Titus, appearing to be at his most vulnerable in a physical and spiritual sense, begins to plot the revenge that leads to the play's dramatic climax. These moments in the text pose the most difficulty in

playing and reception because they have the potential to produce extreme reactions of horror and laughter, sometimes simultaneously.

Less frequently performed in Britain, partly because of the combination of its violent and comic elements that tip horror into farce, *Titus Andronicus* has been staged successfully elsewhere, notably in Japan. In a post-war analysis Hakucho Masamune commented on *Titus Andronicus* in 1947: 'Modern critics say that Shakespeare cannot have written such a cruel drama because they want Shakespeare to be a humanist. But I think that Shakespeare sees into the cruelty peculiar to humankind.'³ This observation by a Japanese citizen following a nuclear attack on his country in 1945 looks beyond clichés about Shakespeare's universal appeal and emphasises the play's concern with human acts of cruelty and their effect on the individual. Almost six decades later in his notes on the Tokyo production of *Titus Andronicus* staged in 2004 Yukio Ninagawa commented: 'We are living in a horrific reality full of violence'⁴ and that the play is 'at once a story and also contemporary history, where being involved forces us to question ourselves radically. This makes us aggressive.'⁵ He referred to political instability in Japan during the 1970s during which the authorities brutally quelled dissent, describing it as 'still a catastrophic time.'⁶ At the turn of the twenty-first century Japan's politically disempowered imperial family faced a potentially heirless future and by 2005 the country was deep in economic recession. Ninagawa's interpretation of *Titus Andronicus* illustrated the repercussions of collapsing political, social, cultural and economic hierarchies by

³ Yoshiko Kawacki citing Hakucho Masamune, 'Titus Andronicus in Japan', in *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays*, ed. by Philip C. Kolin (New York and London: Garland, 1995), pp. 487-495 (p. 492).

⁴ Yukio Ninagawa, 'Rehearsal Photo: Reportage Of Lives In The Pure White Arena', *Ninagawa X Shakespeare III*, dir. by Yukio Ninagawa, Disc 2 DVD (Horpico, 2006) (DVD).

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

creating an alienating environment that combined images of elegance, decadence and violent excess. The resonance of *Titus Andronicus* for citizens of societies that acknowledge the effects of politically motivated violence to the body in modern times is obvious. War atrocities of the recent past demonstrate the unprecedented scale of physical cruelty, including rape and mutilation, from which countries, cultures and individuals are unable to recover. Such events have been referenced in other intercultural productions of the play.⁷ Gregory Doran, for example, suggests that for his production in Johannesburg in 1995 ‘the country itself fed what the play was about.’⁸ In Britain, as Farah Karim-Cooper argues, ‘for all its classical learning and Elizabethan politics, *Titus Andronicus* is steeped in the present political climate.’⁹ The subject matter of the play, therefore, not least that of personal despair in the face of political conflict and staged violence that is emotionally difficult to encounter, continues to involve a modern audience.

⁷ Intercultural productions of *Titus Andronicus*, notably Gregory Doran’s with the Market Theatre in Johannesburg in South Africa in 1995 which toured to the Cottesloe Theatre at the Royal National Theatre the same year, have been developed in the climate of cultures emerging from political oppression; in this case apartheid. Doran describes the contextual framework of the production thus: ‘I directed it with Anthony Sher as Titus [...] just after the ending of apartheid in South Africa. In the country that had invented “necklacing”, which was putting a rubber tyre around someone’s neck and setting it alight, we discovered that the daily experience of violence was such that it made the horrors of *Titus Andronicus* seem virtually everyday.’ (Gregory Doran, interviewed by Will Sharpe, Jan Sewell and Kevin Wright, ‘The Director’s Cut: Interviews with Gregory Doran and Yukio Ninagawa’, in *The RSC Shakespeare: William Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus and Timon of Athens*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), pp. 130-142 (p.131)).

⁸ Gregory Doran, Associate Director, the Royal Shakespeare Company, in conversation with Jonathan Munby (chair), ‘*British Shakespeares*’ seminar, *Local/Global Shakespeares: The Fourth British Shakespeare Association Conference 2009*, Shakespeare’s Globe, 13 September 2009. Doran was appointed as Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company on 12 September 2012.

⁹ Farah Karim-Cooper, ‘Shakespeare’s War on Terror: *Titus Andronicus* at the Globe’, conference paper presented to a seminar at the Renaissance Endings Conference, Roehampton University, 28 October 2006, no pagination.

Deborah Willis observes: ‘Early modern dramatists considered revenge from multiple viewpoints and examined it in the context of changing notions of honour and shame.’¹⁰ Both Titus and Lavinia experience events that bring dishonour to the Andronici. Lavinia’s fate is entirely dependent on Titus’s ‘cruel, irreligious piety’ (1.1.130)¹¹ when he slays Tamora’s son Alarbus to appease the gods; an act that demands ‘sharp revenge’ (1.1.137) to be carried out by his two siblings Chiron and Demetrius during the second act. Revenge is therefore connected with honour and shame, culminating in retributive justice carried out by both Titus and Lavinia, who is described by Bassianus as ‘Rome’s rich ornament’ (1.1.52) and by her father as the ‘cordial of [his] age’ (1.1.166). Father and daughter restore the balance of familial honour in premeditated public action of extreme cruelty. Titus’s private revenge for the rape of his daughter is a grotesque parody of the public courtly ritual of dining which is both horrific and laughable. It is, however, only effective when the audience has become accustomed to experiencing other intensely private and public events and the extremes of their accompanying emotions throughout the performance. These give the play its sense of heightened reality, beginning with a disrupted ritual of burial in Act 1 Scene 1. The incongruous laughter evoked by the horror of this event creates instability by shifting power away from the stage towards an unpredictable audience. Adrian Poole contends that comedy in tragedy is a ‘vital component of dramatic form [that] complicates the rhythmic experience of the play in performance and the angles from which the audience reads it.’¹² The desirability of reading the

¹⁰ Deborah Willis, ‘“The Gnawing Vulture”: Revenge, Trauma Theory and *Titus Andronicus*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.1 (2002), 21-52 (p. 23).

¹¹ William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Alan Hughes, *The New Cambridge Shakespeare*, updated edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Subsequent references are to this edition.

¹² Adrian Poole, *Tragedy, A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 73.

play from multiple viewpoints, and therefore experiencing a variety of reactions, is implied in this view. Other factors contribute to the possibility of different responses, including laughter. John Kerrigan suggests that the ‘shifting, tonal complexity of what Shakespeare achieves in the genre [...] points up the sheer variety of factors which make vengeance hospitable to the comic [...] Repeatedly, vengeance generates from out of its dramaturgic potential, a strain of awkward comedy which raises laughter, then kills it.’¹³ The conditions of performance in the recent past reflect this, since they actively encourage the audience to experience *Titus Andronicus* from perspectives which produce sometimes conflicting responses. These are necessary for the full impact of the dramatic action at the play’s climax to be achieved.

Willis notes that Elizabethan playwrights ‘wrestled in sophisticated ways with the unstable relation of revenge to justice and repeatedly asked what the “private man” should do in response to a wrong when the gods are silent and the state too weak or corrupt to bring about just solutions.’¹⁴ *Titus Andronicus* is one such account of spectacular revenge. It is suited to playing conditions that embrace instability, as demonstrated by performances of the play at Shakespeare’s Globe where audiences are clearly interactive. In this space, according to Carson, the ‘additional unpredictability that is the result of outdoor performances intensifies that audience interaction, creating a new kind of performative specificity.’¹⁵ The auditorium of Shakespeare’s Globe places a unique responsibility on the spectator, especially in the yard spaces, which can be used to advantage for a text that demands

¹³ John Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 216.

¹⁴ Willis, “The Gnawing Vulture”, p. 23.

¹⁵ Carson, ‘Democratising The Audience?’, p. 118.

a range of responses to alienating action to be developed over the course of the play. The experience of performance at Shakespeare's Globe also provides evidence of how the *locus* and *platea* areas of the playing space identified by Weimann can be manipulated to involve parts of the audience, helping to achieve a cumulative effect of horror and laughter by inviting the spectator to act as a complicit witness to events. In this way the audience accrues some of the culpability or sense of fascinated abhorrence attached to dramatic action that the characters on the stage, such as Aaron in his role as villain, are not required to experience. Moreover, Lucy Bailey's production demonstrated that opportunities for creating such interaction are already embedded in the text. These were revealed through the increased use of stage directions, attention to blocking of movement in the space, and prosodic interpretation of the text by the actors during the performance. Drawing out the significance of each of these features is clearly identified in the institutional working practices of Shakespeare's Globe.

Lucy Bailey's production of *Titus Andronicus* illustrates the evocation of laughter and horror for the dual purposes of cohesion, drawing together elements of extreme acts of violence which would be unbearable to witness with such frequency in real life, and coercion of the audience who witnesses them. These reactions can be compared with literary critical discussions of their significance in the tragic text by Kerrigan and Poole. In particular, Poole makes reference to the involvement of the spectator as the 'tragic witness'¹⁶ to events that require both an objective and a subjective response. At Shakespeare's Globe, Lucy Bailey reflected on combining the intimate (tactile) and epic dimensions of Shakespeare's presentation of a

¹⁶ Poole, *Tragedy*, p. 108.

declining civilisation in *Titus Andronicus*. She suggested that during the action ‘[w]e see Rome crumble’¹⁷ and wished the audience to ‘*feel* this collapse in history’.¹⁸ She achieved this by setting the play not just on the stage but all around the auditorium, involving some spectators as performers, witnessing and collaborating in the tragic events. By contrast, the Japanese version of *Titus Andronicus* was presented to its audience with an emphasis on metaphorical staging. Michael Boyd, the Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company until 2012, notes that the *Complete Works Festival* was ‘partly conceived as a sort of research project’¹⁹ as a response to his commitment to making the RSC ‘a more outward-looking theatre company, a company that would show real curiosity in trying to find best practice in Shakespeare production elsewhere, looking for inspiration and lessons to be learned.’²⁰ His statement challenged the preconception that the Royal Shakespeare Company offered definitive versions of the Shakespeare texts it produced, suggesting an interest in creating a sense of equality with the work of international companies. Ninagawa’s production was played in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in a proscenium arch space. The metatheatrical traditions of Kabuki, ‘distinguished by its stylized beauty – a beauty created by the combination of sound, form, and colour’,²¹ partially explains the emblematic approach to Ninagawa’s staging of the play which created an apparently objective distance between the performers and the audience that contrasted with the subjectivity of the environment of Shakespeare’s Globe. In this

¹⁷ Lucy Bailey interviewed by Libbi Lee, in *Titus Andronicus* programme, Shakespeare’s Globe, p. 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Michael Boyd, ‘Michael Boyd speaks to Peter J. Smith’, *Cahiers Élisabéthains, Special Issue 2007*, 10 (2007), 13-17 (p. 13).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Yasuji Toita, *Kabuki: The Popular Theatre*, trans. by Don Kenny (New York: Walker/Weatherhill and Tankosha of Kyoto, 1970), p. 73.

respect, according to Jonathan Bate, Ninagawa's production was 'wholly suited to the proscenium of the RST.'²² Closer analysis of the directorial process, however, reveals that a complex variety of cultural and artistic factors were involved in drawing out the emotionally affecting dimensions of the text.

Ninagawa views Shakespeare's texts through the prism of modern art and media. His acting school in Tokyo offers 'a type of theatre based entirely on the perspective method of Western art.'²³ The production of *Titus Andronicus* combined declarative Kabuki styles of acting and movement with an abstract stage design which emphasised the precarious nature of social and political hierarchies. The visual sense of verticality was contrasted with destabilising lateral action on the horizontal planes of the stage, especially at the start of Act 1. Elinor Parsons describes how the company 'utilised the full depth of the main house stage and also entered through the auditorium. The technique increased the scale of performance and paradoxically enhanced its intimacy.'²⁴ The setting also 'enabled the forestage to be used for subtle shifts between onlooker and participants'²⁵ through the use of wide horizontal steps downstage. Thereafter, Ninagawa's style of direction developed multiple visual perspectives in the *locus* of the play; a feature of tragedy noted by Poole. For example, incorporating the poetic and emblematic features of the figurative language and stage directions in the top-heavy structures of the box-set distorted the audience's view of Rome within the frame of the proscenium arch. The costumes juxtaposed the unyielding severity of both punk (for Demetrius, Chiron and Aaron)

²² Jonathan Bate, 'Introducing the *Complete Works Festival*', *Cahiers Élisabéthains, Special Issue 2007*, 10 (2007), 3-6 (p. 3).

²³ Ninagawa, 'Artist Interview'. This use of visual perspective is also considered in Dominic Dromgoole's production of *King Lear*, discussed in Chapter 7.

²⁴ Elinor Parsons, 'Review of *Titus Andronicus*', *Cahiers Élisabéthains, Special Issue 2007*, 10 (2007), (p. 10).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

and chic haut couture (for Tamora and Lavinia). Stark colour contrasts of white and black emphasised patterns and sensations of intense stasis and emptiness. In particular, the use of red thread-ribbons symbolizing blood, echoing those used in a similarly symbolic context by Peter Brook in his acclaimed production at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1955, was contrasted with predominantly white textile surfaces to emphasize the indelible effect of violence that incites revenge. The inevitably nihilistic outcome for the protagonists was depicted in precise physical yet abstract detail; a hallmark of modern warfare and mediatised representations of its aftermath. All of these staging ideas combined to create an overall impression of intertextual postmodern chaos. For both Bailey's and Ninagawa's productions in London and Stratford-upon-Avon, therefore, specific kinds of emotional engagement by the audience were clearly solicited in different ways in order to create a sense of instability from the outset.

Literary critical accounts of the text.

Kerrigan responds to the critical account of *Titus Andronicus* by Edward Ravenscroft in the late seventeenth century that it was 'rather heap of rubbish than a structure'²⁶ and, more recently, in the twentieth century to T. S. Eliot who dismissed it as 'one of the stupidest and most uninspired plays ever written.'²⁷ Kerrigan outlines the relationship between the closely-worked comic structure and its tragic elements, noting the use of repetitive physical activity as a means of evoking laughter.²⁸ Recent reception by the press has acknowledged the play's ability to attract the audience by focusing on the laughter evoked by excessive violence that leaves spectators

²⁶ Edward Ravenscroft, 'Titus Andronicus or The Rape of Lucrece, London, 1687', in *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays*, ed. by Philip C. Kolin (London: Garland, 1995), pp. 375-6 (p. 375).

²⁷ T. S. Eliot, 'Seneca in Elizabethan Translation', in *Selected Essays*, 3rd edn (London: Faber and Faber, 1999), pp. 65-105 (p. 82).

²⁸ Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy*, pp. 193-208.

‘enthralled or appalled’,²⁹ linking this with the popular demand for representations of comic horror in film by directors such as Quentin Tarantino. As Jonathan Bate suggests, ‘theatre-goers who are also moviegoers will be very familiar with this kind of material’.³⁰ However, the comic aspect was predominantly absent from Julie Taymor’s film version *Titus*, produced in 2000 with Anthony Hopkins in the title role. This suggests that the play’s dramatic power lies in its depiction of the human capacity for visceral violence, even though the effects of Lavinia’s mutilation were presented emblematically on film. Moreover, Bate’s comments do not fully explain the balance between laughter and horror that is struck in live performance, nor do they consider how tension is sustained in real time without the fast-paced editing techniques of film. He describes how throughout *Titus Andronicus* ‘the action shifts between fluidity and stillness. The rising and falling fortunes of the first and last act are dramatised in vertical movement between main stage and aloft space.’³¹ These indications for staging found in the text are part of its epic perspective, showing the spatial relationship of the characters to their surroundings and each other in emblematic form and they could be observed readily in Ninagawa’s production.

Twentieth-century critics of the written text have been concerned with identifying how and why its repetitive violence appeals to live audiences. Jan Kott observes a dichotomy in his reactions to reading and watching *Titus Andronicus*, finding that its ‘cruelties seem[ed] childish’³² as he read, whereas performance

²⁹ John Nathan, ‘Justifiable Homicide’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 June 2006, p. 42.

³⁰ Jonathan Bate, ‘Introduction’, in *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Jonathan Bate, The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd series (London: Thomson Learning, 2004), pp. 1-121 (p. 2).

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

³² Jan Kott, ‘Shakespeare - Cruel and True’ in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, trans. by Boleslaw Taborski, repr. edn (London: Methuen, 1965), pp. 217-224 (p. 217).

provided ‘a moving experience.’³³ He suggests one reason for this: ‘Watching *Titus Andronicus* in performance, we come to understand – perhaps more than by looking at any other Shakespeare play – the nature of his genius: he gave an inner awareness to passion; cruelty ceased to be merely physical. Shakespeare discovered the moral hell.’³⁴ Kott highlights the possibility that complex reactions to the play’s events in performance are not only possible but deliberately evoked. Whilst his analysis acknowledges the power of these responses he does not address Alan Hughes’s objection that ‘the writing seems stylistically uneven. Some of it is Ovidian, formal and mannered, as in Marcus’s speech to the ravished Lavinia (2.4.11-57); some is crude, particularly in Act 1. These passages feel like the work of a young poet.’³⁵ This view contrasts with Hughes’s further observation that ‘[the] stagecraft [...] is as dexterous as anything Shakespeare ever accomplished, which suggests a working familiarity with the theatre’.³⁶ Closer analysis of the staging methods embedded in the written text will therefore explore how these are used for effect in performance. These methods include the use and effect of stage directions and spoken and unspoken language in the form of inflection, gesture and silence. They also include the use of the actor’s body and its relationship with the stage space in the context of metatheatrical approaches to production. When these aspects of stagecraft are considered, the effect of dramatic irony in the text and in the physical blocking as the action unfolds is intensified, giving the events of the play a cohesive force for the duration of the performance that is considered by the audience as repulsive yet compelling viewing.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

³⁵ Alan Hughes, ‘Introduction’, in *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Alan Hughes, *The New Cambridge Shakespeare*, updated edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1-60 (p. 6).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Sustaining dramatic tension in *Titus Andronicus* requires the manipulation of timing in performance and the use of comedy with precision to complement the action and counterbalance its frequent images of mutilation. Kerrigan argues that ‘the dynamics of revenge action run towards tragicomedy’³⁷ in that revenge plays such as *Titus Andronicus* and Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* which were produced in the same period of the mid 1590s have ‘a manipulative and recapitulative force which gives them comic potential.’³⁸ Nicholas Brooke focuses on the instability of audience reaction that can readily be observed in performance when horror produces laughter and vice versa when he argues that tragedy ‘deals in extreme emotions [...] and because they are extreme they are all *liable* to turn over into laughter.’³⁹ Whilst these critical views show why laughter can be part of tragic structure, investigating the role of the spectator in performance provides an insight into how this response is developed. Jean E. Howard suggests that ‘in the largest sense, drama is one of the rhetorical arts insofar as its aim is to move or engage an audience. And, as with all types of rhetoric, an underlying premise is that audiences are not static entities, but are shaped by the skill of the artist and made malleable to his control.’⁴⁰ Movement in the audience is therefore desirable. Using the audience to become part of the dramatic action in the auditorium during performance can be shown particularly at Shakespeare’s Globe in the setting up of scenes, notably at the start of the events in Rome in Act 1 Scene 1 and also in the forest at the start of Act 2 where Lavinia’s rape and mutilation are planned. Intense expression from the audience which complicates reception is also evident in recent performance. In anticipation of both of

³⁷ Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy*, p. 195.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

³⁹ Nicholas Brooke, *Horrid Laughter in Jacobean Tragedy* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1979), p. 3.

⁴⁰ Howard, *Shakespeare’s Art of Orchestration*, p. 6

the productions discussed here, Paul Taylor suggests that in *Titus Andronicus* ‘Shakespeare’s key insight is that at moments of unsupportable pain, humans can be pitched beyond tears into a desperate kind of laughter.’⁴¹ These reactions bring unique problems in terms of staging partly because of their extreme nature but also because the moments which cause them need to be played to maintain a sense of momentum so that the performance does not break down. Manipulation of the audience/actor relationship from the beginning of the performance in advance of climactic events surmounts this difficulty.

Spatial and institutional influences on performance practice.

The theatrical space affects the audience/actor dynamic in other ways. Dennis Kennedy suggests that for the audience, ‘attitudes to the theatre building, and the ludic space, their dress and manners, their own status in the audience, whether they laugh or cry [...] and many more social strategies greatly affect the experience of what is so reductively called “playgoing”.’⁴² The director’s use of the reception space is therefore a crucial part of how the audience’s reaction is shaped. At Shakespeare’s Globe, for example, much of the audience in the yard and lower gallery is free to relocate itself during the performance. The daylight conditions also mean that the whole audience can easily observe itself. As Susan Bennett recognises, the development of ‘new non-traditional audiences [has meant that] emergent theatres have self-consciously sought the centrality of the spectator as a subject of the drama [...] who can think and act.’⁴³ Kennedy supports this view, observing that spectators

⁴¹ Paul Taylor, ‘*Titus Andronicus*: Shakespearean Horror Show’, *Independent*, 25 May 2006, p. 14.

⁴² Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth Century Performance*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 9.

⁴³ Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 1.

‘attend the Globe specifically so that they can assist at the spectacle.’⁴⁴ He suggests that here ‘spectators can see more than ever, that they are the centre of the play, not the actors.’⁴⁵ In *Titus Andronicus* Lavinia assists her father in creating the spectacle of butchering Chiron and Demetrius so if a similar relationship has been developed for the audience to encounter earlier in the action, her ghoulish role is in some ways less alienating for the spectator. Moreover, in this particular space, which takes a special interest in original architectural spatial relationships, and in this particular play, it is possible to reconsider some aspects of the theatrical relationship between audience and actor that may have been lost over time. Terence Hawkes, for example, notes the proximity of sporting and playing activity in Elizabethan culture and its impact on the audience/actor relationship:

[W]here we might polarize bear-baiting and drama, the Elizabethans clearly did not. ‘Playing’, and in particular its commitment to hair-raising roller-coaster contingency, in which spectators and actors find themselves pitched into incoherent terrain where they momentarily unite as participants, characterised both activities to a degree we can only glimpse out of the corner of our collective cultural eye.⁴⁶

In setting up the forest scenes of *Titus Andronicus*, development of this participatory aspect of performance is significant for achieving its dramatic effect, as Act 2 of Lucy Bailey’s production demonstrated.

Whilst the audience’s reaction inside both Shakespeare’s Globe and the Royal Shakespeare Company’s auditoria for these productions differed, the reception of them was also affected by their companies’ working practices which were informed by their attitudes and values. A draft artistic policy for Shakespeare’s Globe states that ‘the actor-audience relationship created by [the] sixteenth century conditions

⁴⁴ Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle*, p. 114.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present*, p. 102

should be explored'⁴⁷, demonstrating the value placed on knowledge gained from the development of interaction between audience and actor with reference to original working practices. Paul Prescott notes the 'theatre management's policy of encouraging an informal relationship between actor and audience as a marker of authenticity, and [he also mentions] the simultaneous project to highlight the contrast between conventional theatrical architecture and etiquette.'⁴⁸ *Titus Andronicus* offers the potential for extreme or unusual responses to action onstage which defy etiquette in most theatres during performance and create a multi-faceted experience. They include making way for actors, collective gasping, cheering, applauding during action, colluding and playing a role which places a significant responsibility on the spectator. Alan C. Dessen's advice to directors at Shakespeare's Globe is to aspire to 'honour and respect the original stage direction as precious evidence [... and] start afresh [...] with as few conceptions as possible about the *aside*, the soliloquy and other forms of direct address to (and eye contact with) the audiences'.⁴⁹ This advice highlights the Globe's focus on reassessing the dramatic devices embedded in the plays' written text for the purposes of engaging the audience. Furthermore, Susan Bennett suggests that in response to the demands of a tourist audience, the essential 'performance-spectator contract'⁵⁰ has changed. Tourists may visit the theatre expecting a more physically interactive and even spectacular kind of entertainment,

⁴⁷ Carson and Karim-Cooper (eds), 'A Draft Artistic Policy – 1988', Appendix Two, in *Shakespeare's Globe*, p. 236.

⁴⁸ Paul Prescott, 'Inheriting the Globe: The Reception of Shakespearean Space and Audience in Contemporary Reviewing', in *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, ed. by Hodgdon and Worthen, pp. 359-375 (p. 363).

⁴⁹ Alan C. Dessen, 'Ten Commandments for the New Globe, 1990', Appendix Three, in *Shakespeare's Globe*, ed. by Carson and Karim-Cooper, pp. 237-238 (p. 237).

⁵⁰ Susan Bennett, 'Shakespeare On Vacation', in *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, ed. by Hodgdon and Worthen, pp. 495-507 (p. 499).

which is potentially more difficult for actors to encounter. Douglas Hodge⁵¹, for example, notes the audience's tendency to try to 'overpower the play.'⁵² Christie Carson, however, recognises in audiences' attitudes 'an approach to the text that assumes the development of mutual understanding.'⁵³ She highlights that the Globe provides 'an international, intercultural collective space that allows for a negotiated audience/actor relationship rather than a space that reaffirms traditional behaviours and hierarchies.'⁵⁴ Considering the demands of this kind of spectatorship in the design and blocking for actors in Globe productions, therefore, has a shaping influence on performance that is unique to this outdoor venue which operates during the summer months at the height of the tourist season.

For an audience attending *Titus Andronicus*, a play which foregrounds the human capacity for acts of cruelty through the use of staged violence in both public and private situations, the opportunities for vocal and physical reaction quickly multiply as the action progresses. *The Edges of Rome* season offered a combination of Shakespeare's Roman plays and new work by late twentieth-century political dramatists such as Howard Brenton.⁵⁵ The title implies a concern with the temporal and spatial thresholds of civilised society in decline. In his introductory remarks on his first season as artistic director, Dromgoole noted the 'macabre humour and Grand Guignol of *Titus Andronicus*',⁵⁶ suggesting that the 'narrative of the Roman Empire – its violent opening [...] and its decline into confusion – throws up any number of

⁵¹ Douglas Hodge, actor playing Titus Andronicus in Shakespeare's Globe's production, 2006.

⁵² Douglas Hodge, quoted in '*Titus Andronicus*: Shakespearean Horror Show', *Independent*, p. 14.

⁵³ Carson, 'Democratising the Audience?', p. 122.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁵⁵ Howard Brenton, playwright of *In Extremis* for *The Edges of Rome* season at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, 2006.

⁵⁶ Dominic Dromgoole, Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre 2006, Programme Notes for *Titus Andronicus*, p. 2.

parallels with the world of today. Questions of citizenship, of political priorities [...] and the folly of vengeance, bustle for space in these plays.’⁵⁷ A sense of movement by the actors and involvement of the audience through humour was therefore predicted for performance from the outset.

By contrast, at the Royal Shakespeare Company’s main house where, in productions from other cultures in particular, the lack of features commonly used to elicit response such as naturalistic staging, a commonly understood language, recognisable body movement and gesture could create a distance between audience and spectator. The play’s emblematic elements in this case were deployed, however, to develop the intense emotional landscape of *Titus Andronicus* that the audience so keenly seeks to encounter. The Royal Shakespeare Company’s relationship with the audience in the first decade of the twenty-first century is of interest because the theatre’s public profile was in flux, according to Bridget Escolme, who argues that ‘the performer/audience relationship appears to have been a growing concern, both in the sense of something to be concerned about, and something profitable.’⁵⁸ Her comments relate to the smaller spaces of the Royal Shakespeare Company’s theatre complex, such as The Swan. However, the kinds of staging techniques developed there, including the opening up of the auditorium through the use of aisles and galleries and the overspill of lighting, also affected working practices in the main house, as Ninagawa’s production of *Titus Andronicus* illustrates. From an institutional perspective, the invitation to his company to perform in Britain responded to the Royal Shakespeare Company’s policy ‘to broaden and deepen our relationships with audiences and artists, producing bold, progressive work that

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Escolme, *Talking to the Audience*, p. 4.

engages with the world in which we live. Michael Boyd suggests that the *Complete Works Festival* was:

a real opportunity to extend our relationships with audiences and artists from around the world [...]. Curiosity about and engagement with best practice from other cultures and disciplines is a critical part of the ensemble jigsaw. We cannot produce theatre in a vacuum – that is why we want to learn and share with other theatre makers. The exposure of our audiences and artists to new, diverse and different styles of theatre is not only an aspiration for the festival; it is a necessity for the Company.⁵⁹

According to the Annual Report of Accounts for 2006/2007 this policy was successful to some degree: ‘527,186 tickets were sold for the *Complete Works Festival*’⁶⁰ in Stratford-upon-Avon, more than 37,000 people ‘enjoyed a Shakespeare production for the first time’⁶¹ and 35,000 tickets were ‘purchased by people from outside the UK.’⁶² The government’s policy of extending the reach of the arts in Britain and attracting a tourist audience therefore, as executed by the RSC through this festival, seems to have been successful to some degree.

Staging Act 1 Scene 1 at Shakespeare’s Globe.

The setting of *Titus Andronicus* at Shakespeare’s Globe allowed the audience to glimpse a ‘darkened world’⁶³ and created a ‘disorientating effect’⁶⁴ by using black cloths that ‘wrap[ped] the stage-posts and tiring-house facade, transforming the stage doors into dim chasms.’⁶⁵ Lucy Bailey wanted to ‘keep the audience out of the space

⁵⁹ Michael Boyd, Artistic Director’s Statement, *The Royal Shakespeare Company Annual Report and Accounts 2005/6* <<http://www.rsc.org.uk/downloads/annualreport2006.pdf>> [accessed 1 January 2013] 1-60 (p. 9). According to the Annual Report and Accounts 2005/6 ‘598, 238 people attended the RSC’s work in Stratford-upon-Avon, London, Newcastle or on tour in the UK (<<http://www.rsc.org.uk/downloads/annualreport2006.pdf>> [accessed 6 August 2013], 1-60 (p. 44)).

⁶⁰ The Royal Shakespeare Company Annual Report and Accounts 2006/7 <<http://www.rsc.org.uk/downloads/annualreport2007.pdf>> [accessed 4 August 2013], 1-33 (p. 8).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Eleanor Collins, ‘*Titus Andronicus*’, *Cahiers Élizabéthains* (2006), 70, 47-49, p. 49.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

for as long as possible for greater effect on entering the auditorium'⁶⁶ and she encouraged the audience to loiter in the surrounding outer area, allowing them a partial view of the interior. The simulation of 'a contained other world [...] which pervades all the senses'⁶⁷ was provided by actors feeding smoking braziers with incense; a familiar olfactory image associated with religious ritual. The open sky unites audience and actors at Shakespeare's Globe playhouse, so it is possible to imagine that events in the auditorium were part of a real world experienced outside the performance space, though the disguise of familiar theatrical symbols confounded expectations.

Weimann's distinction between *locus* and *platea*, dividing the fictional locations of the play from the peripheral area closer to the audience in the real world of the playhouse⁶⁸, is relevant since the manipulation of these spaces underpinned William Dudley's design concept. Lucy Bailey wanted 'the experience to be interactive, for the audience to feel part of the play's blood sport.'⁶⁹ She envisaged that 'the company [would] come at the audience from all directions.'⁷⁰ Dudley drew on classical forms of Roman architecture, combining these with performance practices found in medieval mystery plays that were originally part of the process of separating action on the stage from the audience. In the production of *Titus Andronicus* at Shakespeare's Globe's this separation was reversed, with the most involving and spectacular parts of the action taking place in the yard, notably during

⁶⁶ *Titus Andronicus* Production Meeting Notes, 4 April 2006. Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Archive, London.

⁶⁷ Collins, *Titus Andronicus*, p. 49.

⁶⁸ Definitions of these spaces can be located in Chapter 1 p. 25 of this thesis.

⁶⁹ Libbi Lee, 'A Ritualistic Space', Programme Notes for *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare's Globe, pp. 16-17, (p. 17).

⁷⁰ Lucy Bailey, interviewed by Libbi Lee in 'A Culture of Revenge', *Titus Andronicus* programme, p. 15.

the crucial opening sequence in Act 1 Scene 1, when initial responses to character are set up for the audience. This was partially achieved by building a sloping ramp to the downstage area, enabling actors to access the stage from the yard. The yard audience were asked to take on the role of citizens and help set up the scenes in which violence takes place; for example, making way for Titus's entrance, which is swiftly followed by the retributive sacrifice of Tamora's son Alarbus and Titus's murder of his own son Mutius. The open-air conditions were further modified through the use of a velarium, found in gladiatorial spaces such as the Colosseum, with a hole in centre of the canopy 'inspired by the oculus in the roof of the Pantheon in Rome'⁷¹ according to Lee. Dudley specifies his intentions for the design thus: 'We wanted to echo the Pantheon temple, and create a ritualistic space that would enclose the sullen atmosphere of the play. The design also creates dramatic lighting effects that darken the theatre and give it a sense of claustrophobia and doom.'⁷² It also blurred the distinction between the audience and the acting space that is normally evident inside the Globe auditorium. The impact, according to early show reports, was physically dramatic.⁷³ This atmospheric setting also provided a proleptic link between the city and the 'swallowing womb/Of this deep pit' (2.3.239-40) described later by Quintus in the forest outside Rome, around which much of the tragic action takes place.

From an actor's perspective, the conditions established in the playing space at the start are part of gauging how the text should be delivered. Douglas Hodge notes that in Shakespeare's Globe 'you are very aware that you are connected to the

⁷¹ Libbi Lee, 'A Ritualistic Space', p. 17.

⁷² William Dudley, quoted by Libbi Lee, in 'A Ritualistic Space', p. 17.

⁷³ 'The first fainter fell in the yard twenty minutes into the show [...]. There followed another 11 fainters in the first half [... as a result of] the combination of the velarium holding the air from circulation with an increasing amount of smoke circulating, rising, and no fresh air coming in.' (Show Report for 20 May 2006, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Archive, London).

experience that the audience are having⁷⁴ which creates an immediate need to respond to the spectator. By being able to see virtually all the audience, the sense of overwhelming verticality produced by the location of the seating galleries diminishes the focus not only on the *locus* area of the playing space but also on the actors. In the opening sequence the audience, now inside and awaiting the return of Titus to Rome in Bailey's production, were already becoming part of the *locus* and very much aware of themselves as potential participants in the action. The sloping ramp as an extension of the downstage *platea* area softened the division between the audience and the stage. Two scaffolding towers preset in the yard created an 'aloft' (1.1) space for Saturninus and Bassianus to climb up to and address the onlookers. The audience had to turn away from the traditional *locus* to face itself very early in the action in order to respond to the opening speeches addressed to them as the crowd.

Auditory imagery complemented a sense of disorientation. Django Bates's music provided a 'floating harmony that hovered uneasily between many keys.'⁷⁵ Swedish näverlurs – enormous wooden horns - requiring as many as six people to carry into the auditorium 'ensured that satisfying musical resolutions were impossible.'⁷⁶ Percussive sound⁷⁷ from outside the auditorium pre-empted the arrival of 'Rome's best champion' (1.1.65), 'carried on a palanquin by the captive sons of Tamora'⁷⁸ through the audience, accompanied by Tamora herself and the remnants of Titus's army, including the coffins of his dead sons. This impressive entrance

⁷⁴ Douglas Hodge, telephone interview, 11 December 2006.

⁷⁵ Django Bates, composer, 'Unsettling Sounds', *Titus Andronicus* Programme, Shakespeare's Globe, p. 19.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Lucy Bailey envisaged "'primal sounds" created on period instruments rather than Roman or Elizabethan courtly fanfares.' (*Titus Andronicus* Production Meeting Notes, 4 April 2006, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Archive, London.)

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

suggested in the detailed stage directions of the text between the Captain's call to welcome the returning hero and Titus's arrival with his entourage was offset by the use of humour, firstly by the Captain, dressed in Bacchanalian costume, who delivered his opening line 'Romans, make way' (1.1.64) in a drunken stupor up the ramp from the yard, and secondly by Titus's inability to deliver a coherent speech – a motif that is more fully developed when Lavinia's tongue is excised by Chiron and Demetrius in Act 2 Scene 3.

The expectation of a hero was undercut by casting Douglas Hodge in the title role; he is an actor particularly linked with anti-heroic characters in social satire which require the ability to play subtle and witty comic reactions to tragic situations.⁷⁹ Hodge used the opportunity to 'resalute his country with tears, /Tears of true joy, for his return to Rome' (1.1.75-6) by pausing ironically at the end of the line, allowing his head to 'shake for age and feebleness' (1.1.188). Stepping onto the stage to greet the audience/citizens he presented Titus as a small, weary figure in contrast to the energetic mass celebration of his return. Adrian Poole notes: 'Emptiness provides an important overlap between comedy and tragedy. It can be a comic relief to discover that where you expected to find something inside, there is nothing – a blank, absence, vacancy.'⁸⁰ Hodge's naturalistic presentation of Titus confounded expectations of heroic gestures. By being close enough to observe his facial gesture in detail in daylight it was possible to believe that he was truly ill and disorientated. Act 1 Scene 1 tests an audience's suspension of disbelief by presenting a series of recognisable rituals including the triumphal return of a hero, the burial of the dead,

⁷⁹ Hodge has played Pinter very successfully and his television credits include *Capital City*, a satire on brokers in the 1980s. He was directing a comic farce, *See How They Run* by Philip King, at the Duchess Theatre, London at the same time as playing Titus Andronicus for Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

⁸⁰ Poole, *Tragedy*, p. 77.

retributive murder, betrothal and political union through marriage with alarming speed. In practice, the experience of three matinee performances of *Titus Andronicus* at Shakespeare's Globe during the summer of 2006 showed that the audience was neither restless nor inattentive but increasingly absorbed in the action. Susannah Clapp wrote of the audience's experience of performance: 'Seen from the expensive seats, Lucy Bailey's production is impressive: seen from the yard where you can stand as a groundling for a fiver, it's explosive.'⁸¹ These conditions therefore demonstrably enhanced rather than inhibited reaction.

Titus's private concerns as a father swiftly interrupt Rome's public affirmation of its military superiority in the text of Act 1. Accompanying two of the twenty-one sons he has sacrificed in war, Titus's purpose is to bury them 'amongst their ancestors' (1.1.84). Returning them to silence and stillness is his most important duty and he asks himself: 'Why suffer'st thou thy sons, unburied yet,/To hover on the dreadful shore of Styx?' (1.1.86-7) Imagery and verb choices disrupt the sense of tranquillity by indicating unfinished business. At Shakespeare's Globe, Hodge addressed this question to himself rather than the audience, combining rhetoric with subjective reflection. The bodies were to be buried in real time onstage and 'the coffins [were to] go into the trap.'⁸² By placing lengthy business here in the scene the activity is anti-climactic, beginning with a ritual of grief that contrasts with the celebratory public mood. These sacred rites descend into horrific chaos later in the scene as Titus refuses to allow his son Mutius, whom he has killed in front of the audience, to be buried, thereby denying the audience a sense of closure. In addition

⁸¹ Susannah Clapp, 'Eat your heart out Tarantino: *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare's Globe', *Observer Review*, 4 June 2006, p. 16.

⁸² *Titus Andronicus* Rehearsal Notes Issue 21, April 2006. Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Archive, London.

to presenting the generic stage business of disrupted ritual, as Adrian Poole suggests, the events of the play follow classical conventions in evoking ‘a corresponding desire to get things right, to see the dead figures properly laid to rest.’⁸³ The personal turmoil experienced by Titus on his return to Rome is observed by Douglas Hodge, who describes ‘the dichotomy’⁸⁴ of character responses that the actor must play at the start. He is ‘jubilant in grief’⁸⁵ but has a ‘private agenda going on – [he is] deeply unhappy [and] in total denial of who he is and what he has done.’⁸⁶ He also ‘brings with him the thing that will undo the nation’⁸⁷ in the form of Tamora, a consideration that the actor playing the character clearly bears in mind right from the beginning of the play. Returning from the all-male military environment of war, Hodge suggests that Titus is also ‘absolutely undone by Lavinia’⁸⁸ as a female presence and especially notes the effect of her ‘sheer softness’⁸⁹ on him. As a father, Titus recognises the deep attachment between himself and Lavinia that is easy to overlook in the formal public situation of Act 1 Scene 1. The actor playing the character is experiencing all of these feelings simultaneously and has to communicate them to the audience through the rapid reactions that form the subsequent action: the retributive sacrifice of Tamora’s son Alarbus, his dangerous rejection of nomination in ‘election for the empire’ (1.1.183) and the irrational murder of Mutius. The audience, attempting to empathise with Titus as a man ravaged by his war experiences, is taken up with the rapidity of such disparate violence occurring during the opening fifteen minutes and wonders what might happen in subsequent action. Bailey’s plans for

⁸³ Poole, *Tragedy*, p. 41.

⁸⁴ Douglas Hodge, telephone interview, 11 December 2006.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

unsettling the audience were demonstrably effective. Michael Dobson noted of this production that ‘being in the yard [...] feels like being in the arena before the lions arrive, and it turns out to be almost as perilous.’⁹⁰ The sense of instability is only offset by the presentation of the main character Titus who has to find an underlying connection between disparate emotional reactions within the context of a rapidly changing social structure, which evokes curiosity in the audience.

Using the body in the space. Ninagawa’s metatheatrical production at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

In his discussion of the written text Jonathan Bate notes how ‘the eye is fixed on the centre: on the tomb in Act 1, the pit in Act 2’ and also that ‘it is not only things which hold the central focus; it is also people [...] frozen into tableaux that make them like pictures, like emblems.’⁹¹ Michael Dobson describes Ninagawa’s interpretation as ‘a relentless, powerful spectacle of a production, using [...] a close, literal and very full translation of Shakespeare’s text’.⁹² This was clearly a feature of Ninagawa’s staging concept as a director, whether it was spoken by the actor or its images were translated into the stage picture. Outside the Royal Shakespeare Theatre auditorium, costumes including armour and properties such as standards were preset in full view of the audience. As one audience member suggested, it was ‘almost like the guts of the play were being shown already.’⁹³ Costumed actors mingled closely with the audience here. Inside the auditorium the gradual transition to performance began: ‘an immense white set [was] still being assembled, with actors and stagehands

⁹⁰ Michael Dobson, ‘Shakespeare Performances in England’, *Shakespeare Survey* 60 (2007), 284-319, (pp. 307-8).

⁹¹ Bate, ‘Introduction’, in *Titus Andronicus*, p. 39.

⁹² Dobson, ‘Shakespeare Performances in England’, p. 304.

⁹³ John Miles, audience member of Ninagawa’s *Titus Andronicus*, interviewed 25 August 2007, Royal Holloway College.

gathered informally about the stage among mobile rails of costumes, and, disconcertingly, severed heads, well after the audience [had] taken their seats'⁹⁴ while performers warmed up in the aisles, practising leaps and fighting poses connoting the gladiatorial practices of Roman culture. Ninagawa himself appeared, in a modern appropriation of Kabuki ritual in which black-clad assistants help the actors during the action. The stage was a mass of chaotic activity.⁹⁵ Crew and actors interacted under a lighting cover of geometrical patterns and drawings which were projected onto the immaculate, blank white walls of the set. These flats concealed high, sharp-edged doors that opened later onto black, void-like interiors. A sense of emptiness, noted previously as a feature of the ritual of tragedy by Poole, was therefore established.

Henri Lefebvre's discussion of classical spaces connects them with inevitable corruption: 'The city-state, at once beautiful, true and good, identified mental with social, higher symbolisms with immediate reality, and thought with action, in a way that was destined to degenerate.'⁹⁶ Ninagawa's set and staging reflected this idea. The instability of Rome's political hierarchy was emphasised by five cut-out arched recesses placed high across the upstage flats, reminiscent of both Italian Renaissance architecture and classical buildings such the Colosseum.⁹⁷ With nothing to protect the backlit characters standing in the recesses from a potentially fatal fall far below, the lethal political infrastructure of Rome was presented as a tableau. The vertically situated 'aloft' (1.1) space was repeatedly used in Act 1 Scene 1 for the purpose of

⁹⁴ Dobson, 'Shakespeare Performances in England', p. 303.

⁹⁵ Performance recording of Ninagawa's *Titus Andronicus*, 23 June 2006, Shakespeare Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon.

⁹⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 239.

⁹⁷ Statues of Roman political figures were displayed in tiers around the outside walls of the Colosseum.

setting out the changing hierarchies through visual reference connoting misrule.

When Tamora was made empress, for example, and the stage directions suggest ‘*Enter aloft the EMPEROR with TAMORA, and her two SONS, and AARON the Moor*’ (1.1.298-299), the irony of the moment for Titus was clearly created by the presentation of these characters looking down from their new positions in the political hierarchy, whereas at the Globe this action remained largely on the horizontal level of the stage and the reversal of fortune was more difficult to absorb visually.

Further emblematic features from the text which enhanced the epic aspect of the classical setting were used for effect in the design concept. A giant grinning she-wolf statue, suckled by Romulus and Remus, gazed blindly out at the audience. It was set centre-stage as a moribund monument to Rome’s evolution and pagan history; an ‘unmissable symbol of the predatory savagery that has always been somewhere at the centre of Rome’s identity since long before Titus declares the city a wilderness of tigers.’⁹⁸ The cherubic twins were fixed in marble and eerily frozen in time, suckling from their wolf-mother. Whereas wolves nurture their cubs, humans eat their offspring in this play. In the forest scenes of *Titus Andronicus* the predatory she-wolf is transformed into the image of Tamora as a tigress through the use of imagery, and the suckling boys are used by Lavinia to describe the cruelty of Chiron and Demetrius just before she is rendered mute: ‘The milk thou suck’st from her did turn to marble;/Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny’ (2.3.144-5). Ninagawa incorporated this image into the set in his staging of the she-wolf monument. It was a symbol of power rendered useless in the context of the play, wheeled up and

⁹⁸ Dobson, ‘Shakespeare Performances in England’, p. 303.

downstage during the city scenes to make space for action, indicating its redundancy as an emblem of strength and beauty at this moment in Roman history. Ninagawa also notes that ‘the Rome of this play resembled a photograph taken in the ruins of Nagasaki after the atomic bomb dropped. Still standing is a stone gateway at the entrance to a Shinto shrine and elsewhere a stone has broken the neck of the statue of Mary [...] My *Titus Andronicus* is a kitsch, blasted white city based on that image.’⁹⁹ His stimulus for using the she-wolf statue was clearly rooted in his own experience in the recent past in order to connect with a sense of history.

Lighting effects created insecurity in the audience. A whiteout of nuclear reactive intensity followed by a disorientating blackout in the whole auditorium as an opening cue severed contact between the actor and spectator, signalling abrupt, violent change. The opening dialogue between Saturninus and Bassianus, delivered directly to the audience, was declarative and confrontational. Titus’s arrival in an ‘appalling procession’¹⁰⁰ from the back of the auditorium and up the wide horizontal steps, was preceded by standard bearers, prisoners chained at their throats, ecstatic leaping soldiers and masked pallbearers carrying glass coffins containing his dead sons. These were placed centre-stage, downstage of the she-wolf. The bodies inside were representational rather than naturalistic: Perspex mannequins wrapped in shrouds of clear film with red, thread-like ribbons attached to symbolise blood; a prop that was used throughout and shared among the actors to create a common link between violence and character. When Titus turned his back to the audience in Act 1, for example, his costume was covered densely with similar red thread-ribbons,

⁹⁹ Yukio Ninagawa, interviewed by Will Sharpe, Jan Sewell and Kevin Wright in ‘The Director’s Cut: Interviews with Gregory Doran and Yukio Ninagawa’, in *The RSC Shakespeare, William Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus and Timon of Athens*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), pp. 130-142 (p. 135).

¹⁰⁰ Dobson, ‘Shakespeare Performances in England’, p. 303.

foreshadowing betrayal and also suggesting his human frailty. From the start there was no pretence at concealing aggression towards the prisoners or between the Romans themselves. Under these conditions, beginning with a public display of violent gesture and expression, the impulsive act of Titus's slaying of his own kin was convincing.

The presentation of the forest and its impact on the audience.

The dramatic structure of the forest scenes in Act 2 is part of the darkly comic dimension of the play, although subsequent events taking place there appear to contradict this perspective. The forest scenes create a sequence of events that climaxes not in Lavinia's rape and mutilation, which happens off stage, but in her discovery by Marcus. Whilst in comedy unexpected events in the forest become the norm, as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Love's Labour's Lost*, in *Titus Andronicus* the audience is never unsure about what is going to be encountered there since Aaron has already suggested to Chiron and Demetrius what will happen. Carrying his bag of gold alone onstage to 'coign a stratagem' (2.2.5) he brings with him part of the city to the forest that will 'beget/A very excellent piece of villainy' (2.3.6-7). This dramatically ironic piece of mischief is one that only the audience is privy to. The audience's knowledge of an intention that will shape the course of events places a responsibility on the spectator to become more involved in the violence that follows. However, the unfolding scene is so horrific that it mocks the initial relish of sporting action, thereby creating the difficult uncomfortable tension between mirth and horror that is intended. The full implication of the 'double-hunt' (2.3.19) imagined by Tamora is also clearly understood by the audience. In these

conditions, the blackly comic potential of the scene begins to build until it breaks with Lavinia's shocking entrance as a dumb-show.

In the production at Shakespeare's Globe laughter was evoked through the use of the yard. The upbeat end of Demetrius's rhyming couplet 'Chiron, we hunt not, we, with horse nor hound/But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground' (2.2.25-6) pre-empted a chase through the yard that cast spectators in the role of bystanders who already knew that what they saw distracted from the real business of the next scene and that the hunters who could save Lavinia and Bassianus were, in effect, abandoning them. Puppet-hounds pursued their prey enthusiastically while metal boar-masks were carried through the crowd across the yard and the audience were given responsibility for making an escape route. Superficially, this created relief and a playful, lighter tone for the next scene, setting up the conditions for laughter. Bassianus's ironic question: 'Who have we here?' (2.3.55), more suited to a slapstick clowning sequence but addressed to Tamora, was a provocative statement the audience found itself unable to resist, spilling over into laughter¹⁰¹ and interrupting the flow of the subsequent action promised by Aaron. In Bailey's production, using the audience space to integrate spectators with the action also contributed to the presentation of the 'abhorred pit' (2.3.97), elements of which were carried over to Lavinia's rape. Dudley had suggested 'the use of a net [...] as a "man trap" to capture Bassianus [...] to be extended from the stage across the theatre.'¹⁰² It was unravelled from the edge of the ramp and used to catch Bassianus as he was thrown into the pit by Chiron and Demetrius, bringing his murdered body into the audience. He was

¹⁰¹ Recording of *Titus Andronicus* performance on Friday 4 August 2006, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Archive, London (VHS).

¹⁰² *Titus Andronicus* Production Notes, 4 April 2006, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Archive, London.

then wrapped in the webbing; an image reiterated by the subsequent presentation of Lavinia, whose first entrance on the stage after her rape showed her concealed by a similar net.

The presentation of character and in particular the use of language in Act 2 Scene 4 has attracted critical dissatisfaction with the play as a performance text for audiences in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Frank Kermode suggests that to a modern director the rhetorical reaction of Marcus's horror on discovering his mutilated niece (2.4.11-57), is 'something of an embarrassment: Marcus, instead of doing something about Lavinia, who, as his account of the matter confirms, is in real danger of bleeding to death, makes a speech lasting a good three minutes.'¹⁰³ Shakespeare, Kermode suggests, 'simply lacked the means to do, or even envisage, what he achieved later, and his treatment of silences is an illustration of this.'¹⁰⁴ This point of view neglects the relationship between poetry and the use of time and space within the structure of the performance and also the actor's use of timing to produce the prosodic and paralinguistic features of the text. Poole argues in his commentary on a modern tragedy, Brian Friel's *Translations*, which also deals with politically motivated mutism as a central image of dramatic significance: 'In so far as the state of silence is tragic, it is because of the pain that has gone into its making, and the difficulty of finding the right words to break it.'¹⁰⁵ If the events of *Titus Andronicus* are considered from this perspective, evidence emerges that is more congruent with Michael Cordner's suggestion that 'the rhetorical intricacy and inventiveness of [Shakespeare's] dialogue presuppose extreme vocal dexterity and

¹⁰³ Frank Kermode, *Shakespeare's Language* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁵ Poole, *Tragedy*, p. 82.

expressiveness in its performers'.¹⁰⁶ When a softly spoken actor such as Richard O'Callaghan¹⁰⁷ delivered Marcus's speech to the dumb Lavinia using appropriate timing at Shakespeare's Globe, it was perfectly possible to elicit an audible gasp of horror from the audience when his question 'Why dost not speak to me?' (2.4.21) received her silent, gaping mouth pouring blood in response.¹⁰⁸ This was reinforced by speaking the lines traditionally addressed to Lavinia directly to the audience, who are usually mute during performance at this moment, except for their initial reaction.

The influence of Ovid on *Titus Andronicus* is epitomized by the re-enactment of the story of Philomel by Chiron and Demetrius and accentuated by Lavinia's revelation of her assailants through her use of *Metamorphosis* to lead Marcus and her father to them in Act 4 Sc 1. The Ovidian references prompt reflection on her initial discovery in the woods by Marcus. Jonathan Bate's analysis of the scene highlights the comparative benefits of learning from the written text and learning from the text in performance in the context of the play's tragicomic style that are very relevant to the methodology developed here. In his comments on the writers' uses of form, language and structure, Bate illustrates their similarities, suggesting that they share:

a refusal to submit to the decorums of genre, a delight in the juxtaposition of contrasting tones – the tragic and the grotesque, the comic and the pathetic, the cynical and the magnanimous; an interest above all in human psychology, particularly the psychology of desire in its many varieties; an exploration of the transformations wrought by extremes of emotion; a delight in rhetorical ingenuity, verbal fertility, linguistic play [...] The Ovidian and the Shakespearean self is always in motion, always in pursuit or flight.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

¹⁰⁷ Richard O'Callaghan, actor playing Marcus in Shakespeare's Globe Theatre's production, 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Recordings of performances of *Titus Andronicus*, dir. Lucy Bailey, on 4 August 2006 and 6 September 2006, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Archive, London (VHS).

¹⁰⁹ Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 3.

It is dramaturgically deliberately ironic, therefore, that Lavinia's presentation of her wounds to Marcus in the woods is marked by his response to her in Ovidian language which creates a moment of stasis. The pause allows time for reflection before the pursuit of Lavinia's assailants eventually continues to its dramatic conclusion. Bate argues against Eugene M. Waith's opinion that Marcus's speech is 'a narrative rather than a dramatic device'¹¹⁰. Waith also comments that: 'We have the description which almost transforms Lavinia, but in the presence of live actors the poetry cannot perform the necessary magic. The action frustrates, rather than re-enforces, the operation of the poetry.'¹¹¹ Bate's response is to consider the text in relation to the audience more closely:

As audience members, we need Marcus'[s] formalization just as much as he does himself in order to be able to confront the mutilated Lavinia. The presence of the audience is crucial; a critique of humanism is built into the action, but the audience is capable of discriminating between right and wrong uses of learning. Co-ordinate with the implicit attack on a theoretical education is a defence of a theatrical one. The characters put their knowledge of the classics to destructive use; the play in the theatre gives the audience a creative knowledge in that it teaches them how to respond sympathetically to suffering. In this sense, the play is Shakespeare's 'Defense of Poesie'. Thus one might say: if Chiron and Demetrius had seen a dramatization of the Philomel story, instead of cold-bloodedly read it in the classroom, they would have wept for her instead of re-enacted her rape.'¹¹²

This interpretation of the scene is supported by the experience of performance, as the following discussion demonstrates.

On the stage, the full effect of Marcus's discovery of Lavinia at Shakespeare's Globe was dependent on the audience's silence about witnessing previous events that he had not seen and which it was powerless to impart. In the

¹¹⁰ Eugene M. Waith, 'The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*', *Shakespeare Survey 10: The Roman Plays* (1957), 39-48, p. 47.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

¹¹² Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. 112.

playhouse the reaction of Marcus to Lavinia on the stage resonates with the spectator because it is supported by the depth of the audience's unexpressed conviction that an act requiring revenge in the future has been perpetrated. In comparison with other Shakespeare plays, the dramatic moment has an impact comparable to Henry's reaction in *King Henry V* to the news that the boys in the English camp have been murdered in an act expressly against the rules of war. It creates the possibility of subsequent retribution and carries forward the action after the shocking event. Lear's long howls as he carries the body of Cordelia onto the stage creates a similar pause but structurally its placement in the closing scene is for a different dramatic purpose and contributes to a specific kind of tragic dramatic climax in that the king can no longer redress the wrong done to his daughter and the man dies. Titus, on the other hand, gains much energy for action as the result of Lavinia's wounds.

If the discovery of Lavinia is treated not as a clumsy moment in which Marcus is asked to act symbolically rather than naturalistically, but as an opportunity for the audience to reflect on what must surely follow as a result, it is possible to show that Marcus is a facilitator. He helps the audience to engage with the horror of what has happened to Lavinia through his own inability to deal with her, or touch her. Because Marcus stands back to contemplate what he sees at this emblematic moment, so does the audience. She is allowed plenty of space to transform herself, to metamorphose into the physically and mentally damaged person she has become and the audience is invited to dwell on the sickening sight of her. The audience is partially alienated because it sees that that she is changed forever and it is no longer possible to respond to her as before, yet is unable to leave halfway through the play's performance. The physical experience of Lavinia's injuries has been hidden from

view but her entrance onto the stage demands complete focus on her broken body. There may be a reason, as Christie Carson argues, for these kinds of visual moments of shifting perspective for the audience: 'By increasingly relying on the audience to participate in creating symbolic meaning on stage Shakespeare's visual illusions become increasingly engaging.'¹¹³ In this respect Marcus facilitates a change of attitude towards Lavinia and also divides the audience reaction in order to engage it more deeply. Some of the spectators produce a dramatic spectacle themselves by fainting, some leave, and some watch the chaotic scene unfold. Each person plays their part in the events of the play whether on the stage or in the auditorium. Indeed, the opportunity to leave the theatre, which is always present, becomes a dramatic tool that compels the audience to take control and make a commitment to stay.

Marcus's speech is uninterrupted and he uses a range of techniques to express the personal and public dimensions of Lavinia's rape. His initial question 'Who is this?' (2.4.11) is clearly addressed to the audience, inviting it to inspect her with him before he turns to identify her by her familial relationship to him as 'niece' (4.2.11). His intimate and dramatically ironic imperative 'Cousin: a word' (4.2.11) was followed by a lengthy pause as Lavinia walked slowly downstage at Shakespeare's Globe: a graphically emblematic presentation repeated in Ninagawa's interpretation. Marcus describes the loss of Lavinia's limbs with a metaphor, 'sweet ornaments' (4.2.18), that recalls the earlier description of her by Bassianus in Act 1. Furthermore, Marcus's simile describing her 'crimson river of warm blood/Like to a bubbling fountain stirred with wind' (2.4.22-3) creates the impression of fluency and graceful natural movement. When he suggests how it 'Doth rise and fall between thy

¹¹³ Christie Carson, 'Visual Scores', in *Shakespeare and the Making of Theatre*, ed. by Stuart Hampton-Rees and Bridget Escolme (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 69-78 (p. 87).

roséd lips,/Coming and going with thy honey breath' (2.2.24-5) he provides the starkest contrast with the shock of her actual physical state on the stage, presented by Lavinia at Shakespeare's Globe through trembling silence. Paralinguistic gestures during Marcus's speech are also significant. In the Globe's production Marcus's move towards Lavinia for his rhetorical 'Shall I speak for thee? Shall I say 'tis so?' (2.4.33) restored a naturalistic intimacy which broke the emblematic perspective. The figurative language Marcus uses to describe his reaction to her is also aptly chosen since it prefigures events much later in the play. Declaring how '[s]orrow concealéd, like an oven stopped/Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is' (2.4.35-6) he establishes the thread of culinary imagery that eventually extends into physical dramatic action. It is Lavinia who assists her father in preparations for the cooking of the pie served as a dish for Tamora that ultimately leads to Lavinia's own death.

Ninagawa's forest and its impact on the events of the play and the audience.

Literary and theatrical critical accounts of *Titus Andronicus* comment on the disparity between the beauty of the verse and the violent enactment of the physical cruelties of the text onstage. However, as Albert H. Tricomi suggests, 'the ways in which the figurative language imitates the literal events of the plot makes *The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus* a significant dramatic experiment'.¹¹⁴ In developing Ninagawa's interpretation of the forest scene at Stratford, the beauty expressed in the poetry of the text was part of the process not only of expressing horror but also providing a visually ironic perspective from which the decline of Rome's civilised society could be observed. For the theatre critics, the stage 'possessed by atrocity,

¹¹⁴ Albert H. Tricomi, 'The Aesthetics of Mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*, *Shakespeare Survey* 27 (1974), 11-20 (p. 11).

never cease[d] to look eerily and ironically beautiful’¹¹⁵ and the ‘restraint in the staging’¹¹⁶ contrasted productively with the ‘thrilling intensity’¹¹⁷ of performances. This was achieved through the transformation of the text’s poetic imagery into visually arresting *mise-en-scène*. Slapstick comic business at the start of the forest scenes was rejected in favour of a stage picture of austere beauty that was enchanting. Before opening his production, Ninagawa predicted that the style might have a profound effect: ‘The air of my production may be completely different from a horror film [...] But I warn you: it is so beautiful, it’ll be painful to look at it.’¹¹⁸ It created a dilemma over how to respond in view of what the audience surely knew was about to happen. Both Bassianus and Lavinia were encouraged to be as vindictive as they chose to Tamora, distancing them from audience empathy. As R. F. Hill notes of Lavinia: ‘She is famous for her chastity, yet there is something rank in her “nice preserved honesty”’¹¹⁹ and he cites her attitude to Tamora here as an example. If the declarative prosodic features of Kabuki noted in delivery of the Japanese text are considered at this moment, the strengths of Lavinia’s character are easily foregrounded. In fact, these are necessary attributes for Lavinia, whose destiny will be to assist her father in carrying out revenge.

At Stratford the physical nature of the pit was concealed upstage of the withered elder tree described in the text, now replacing the she-wolf centre-stage. From here disembodied screams could easily be heard. The focal point of the scene

¹¹⁵ Nicholas De Jongh, ‘A Japanese View of a Roman Hell’, *Evening Standard*, 23 June 2006, p. 34.

¹¹⁶ Charles Spencer, ‘A Thrilling and Very Restrained Gorefest’, *Daily Telegraph*, 23 June 2006, p. 31.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Yukio Ninagawa interviewed by Benjamin Secher in ‘Death, Mutilation – and Not a Drop of Blood’, *Daily Telegraph, Saturday, ART*, 10 June 2006, p. 9.

¹¹⁹ R. F. Hill, ‘The Composition of *Titus Andronicus*’, *Shakespeare Survey 10: The Roman Plays* (1957), 60-70 (p. 62).

remained the discovery of Lavinia after the rape, preceded by a soundtrack of wolves and the gradual emergence of classical music – as incongruous as some of the musical effects produced at Shakespeare’s Globe, yet compatible with the themes of predation and the juxtaposition of stasis and fluency. Lavinia entered far upstage and moved towards the audience with red ribbons flowing from her hands and mouth, showing her wounds from a distant and then a closer perspective as she completed her journey down to the steps; stage business that took almost two minutes to complete. She was followed by Chiron and Demetrius, laughing in a state of hysteria, also covered in red thread-ribbon that connected them to her. Sensing that Marcus was near, Lavinia hid like a wounded animal among the leaves, winding her way up, down and across the stage. Marcus’s entrance through the auditorium, ‘gave enough distance for him to make sense of his gradual realisation of her injuries [and] his positioning encouraged solidarity with the audience.’¹²⁰ In fact, he spoke his lines to Lavinia, the audience and himself and his pauses suggested the intensity of what he witnessed. Unlike a Western performance that concentrates on the poetic rhythm of his speech he showed gasping horror, approaching a little at a time, leaving long pauses between utterances before taking hold of Lavinia and straightening her up from the stage where she crouched, literally presenting her to the audience. In this way he re-established a link between Lavinia and the audience in her new, muted state. Both characters faced the audience in this way to offer a tableau of the stage picture before he covered her and led her upstage to exit. The emblematic value of this episode was thus fully explored by Ninagawa in this scene through the coordination of gesture and movement. His interest in the relationship between the

¹²⁰ Parsons, ‘“This Wide and Universal Theatre”: Shakespeare In Different Voices’, *Cahiers Élisabéthains Special Issue 2007*, 10 (2007), p. 8.

body and space is a central feature of his work. In interview in 1995 he notes how close and physical the relationship must be between the actor and the text when he directs Shakespeare: ‘When I think of stylization, I always consider how the body can incarnate the words that were first experienced in a reading [...] we have to twist ourselves, so to speak. We have to twist the core of our being.’¹²¹ His translator describes how his approach is ‘from the visible (the ocular) to the invisible; from the outer factors (movements, position, pose, stance, direction, facial expressions, and costumes) to the inner workings of the characters.’¹²² Whilst the body is used in different ways from those favoured by theatres in the West, visual impressions of it leave a lasting effect. In *Titus Andronicus* the body itself becomes rhetorical and this was evidenced in Lavinia’s appeals to the audience, waving the stumps of her arms towards them and showing red ribbons flowing from her mouth. The sites of injury were repeatedly and emphatically displayed.

Turning towards revenge: Act 3 Scene 1.

Nicholas Brooke suggests that the effect of laughter on the stage in tragedy ‘celebrates anarchy or generates chaos, and in either sense is totally hostile to any normative process’,¹²³ which leads to the conclusion that this reaction to violence is not the expression of delight or relief but subversive. The laughter evoked in scenes subsequent to Lavinia’s mutilation is sometimes of this kind - notably in the fly-killing scene in Act 3 Scene 2, when Titus berates his brother for killing a fly after enduring war, murder and violence against himself. Elsewhere Brooke also notes,

¹²¹ Yukio Ninagawa, interviewed 4 July 1995 with Takahashi Yasunari, Anzai Tetsuo, Matsuoka, Kazuko, Ted Matohashi, and Ian Carruthers, in ‘Interview with Ninagawa Yukio’, in *Performing Shakespeare in Japan*, ed. by Minami Ryuta, Ian Carruthers, John Gillies, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 208-219 (p. 215).

¹²² Kazuo Matsuoka, ‘Yukio Ninagawa’, in *Fifty Key Theatre Directors*, ed. by Shomit Mitter and Maria Shevtsova (Oxford: Routledge, 2005), pp. 134-138 (p. 136).

¹²³ Brooke, *Horrid Laughter*, p. 2.

however, that during this comic reaction by the main character Titus '[t]he obsessive mind is superbly revealed.'¹²⁴ The physical attack on Titus just before this episode is also a turning point marked by a chilling moment of despair expressed as laughter; after this he becomes committed to premeditated revenge that escalates into violence, the impact of which depends on how the actor communicates with the audience.

When Titus is surrounded by the outcomes of physical violence to his family and himself in the central act, the following exchange takes place with his brother Marcus:

Marcus: Now is the time for action; why art thou so still?

Titus: Ha ha ha!

Marcus: Why dost thou laugh? It fits not with this hour.

Titus: Why, I have not another tear to shed.
 Besides, this sorrow is an enemy,
 And would usurp upon my wat'ry eyes
 And make them blind with tributary tears.
 Then which way shall I find Revenge's cave? (3.1.261-7)

In performance, Titus's lapse into laughter is one of the hardest lines to play and receive. Unlike Lear's howl of anguish as he enters with Cordelia dead in his arms, it attracts attention because it does not seem to fit with 'this hour' (3.1.262) and suggests the onset of his madness. Unlike other significant gestures that are indicated by stage directions, it is written into the text as dialogue and the brevity of the line is indicative of its strength. In performance it will be different every time it is played, dependent for its effect on the actor who expresses it and the audience that hears it. Jean E. Howard indicates the impact of silence on the action at this point: 'The silence of an unanswering voice [...] can be immensely frustrating to listeners both

¹²⁴ Nicholas Brooke, *Shakespeare's Early Tragedies* (London: Methuen, 1968), p. 40.

on the stage and in the theatre audience [...] Moreover, living silences can clearly do more than create suspense or evoke frustration. In certain circumstances, particularly when a speaker lapses into silence and seems *unable* to speak, stage silences can suggest inexpressibly strong emotions.’¹²⁵ With no more tears to shed, Titus turns to laughter to mark his horror and grief. This is also the tragic moment at which he begins to plot energetic and spectacular revenge. Marcus is disturbed by his gesture of stillness in metaphorical and real time and draws attention to it, but Titus, now divested of physical balance after losing his hand, shows a sense of developing movement in his mind, illustrated by his discursive ‘Why’ and ‘Besides’. His reference to running water is an antidote to the excessive action of severance and he takes control of his tears. The exact purpose of his laughter, therefore, indicates a move towards continuity rather than succumbing to the hysteria of physical chaos. Laughter becomes a tool of navigation to find his way forward and achieve closure by exacting revenge on Chiron, Demetrius and Tamora.

James Hirsh suggests that inappropriate laughter on the stage has a specific function in *Titus Andronicus*. He notes that Marcus’s chastisement of Titus ‘would seem to apply as well to an audience that has tittered during the performance of an apparent tragedy.’¹²⁶ He considers that the play ‘dramatizes incongruity in the human condition not merely by showing characters who behave incongruously, but by inducing the audience itself to behave incongruously.’¹²⁷ This is surely necessary for the action that follows. The difficulties faced by the actor playing Titus at this moment appear insurmountable. He has to ignore the physical reaction to his wounds, receive the heads of his sons and make decisions that will affect the second

¹²⁵ Howard, *Shakespeare’s Art of Orchestration*, p. 85.

¹²⁶ Hirsh, ‘Laughter at *Titus Andronicus*’, *Essays in Theatre* 71 (1988), 59-74 (p. 66).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

half of the play in minutes. If the action is seen as part of the preceding scene in performance the impetus for revenge that began in the forest becomes clearer. At Shakespeare's Globe Act 3 Scene 1 was placed in advance of the interval and signalled a change in tone and pace, signifying Titus's descent into madness from grief. The setting on the stage, however, was low key, with the actors sitting in the *locus* or standing in a small family group. Hodge, playing Titus, took full advantage of the rhetoric of his own speeches preceding his mutilation, using the downstage ramp in the *platea* and then repeatedly returning to Lavinia onstage, bringing support from the auditorium. Aaron's entrance enabled him to make the most of a comic opportunity, highlighting references to hands and making a macabre joke of his situation. The intense blocking of these moments is described in detail in the prompt copy at Shakespeare's Globe and suggests that great attention was paid to the movement of the actors onstage, creating a slapstick atmosphere 'like a kid's game.'¹²⁸ The audience, used to Aaron's chillingly cruel character, became more objective in the scene and were required to watch intently as he manoeuvred Titus further into stage business that climaxed with his mutilation. Michael Dobson suggests that Hodge excelled here 'when on that awful laugh after learning how Aaron has tricked him out of his right hand he awakens into a permanent state of nightmare in which there is nothing serious left to lose.'¹²⁹ Audience attention shifted from rhetoric to physical deed; an ironic reversal of expectation in a play that emphasises the curtailment of physical capacity and the mental decline of the military hero from the very first scene. No other outcome than complete chaos is possible. Even so, Douglas Hodge elicited the support of the audience before the

¹²⁸ Prompt Copy notation, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Archive, London.

¹²⁹ Dobson, 'Shakespeare Performances in England, 2006', *Shakespeare Survey* 60 (2007), 284-319 (p. 308).

interval break by walking downstage to the *platea* once again for his address to a crowd totally silenced by his unexpected laughter:

You heavy people, circle me about
That I may turn me to each one of you
And swear upon my soul to right your wrongs. (3.1.275-7)

In a circular auditorium the speech carries the conviction of a leader fighting for a cause on behalf of those who cannot speak. It heralds the rapid sequence of grotesque violence including the throat-cutting of Demetrius and Chiron that concludes with their consumption by their mother in the final scene.

Ninagawa's presentation of the scene and audience response.

Setting up the scene in Ninagawa's production, the original procession through the audience from Act 1 Scene 1 was re-enacted in the blocking of Act 3 Scene 1 to represent Titus's reversal of fortune, making reference to the cyclical fluency and irony of the play's tragic structure. The stage directions at this point: '*Enter the Judges and Senators with Titus's two sons [Quintus and Martius] bound, passing on the stage to the place of execution, and Titus, going before, pleading*'¹³⁰ were used in full; actors proceeded through the auditorium in real time, but as prisoners not heroes. Titus was abandoned onstage and remained alone until Lucius re-entered. He conducted most of the scene crawling prostrate on the stage before Marcus arrived with Lavinia, still enfolded in his cloak to hide her wounds. The subsequent revelation of her allowed Titus to lead the ritual of mourning. The entire action of this sequence from Lavinia's discovery by Marcus in the forest until this point was choreographed for visual impact and the rhetoric was uttered in a declarative tone. Rather than the underlying sense of control over future events hinted at by Hodge in

¹³⁰ Stage directions for Act 3 Scene 1, in *Titus Andronicus*, p. 105.

this scene at the Globe, the Japanese production emphasised despair, made more poignant because it was uttered by a consummate soldier well versed in the atrocities of war.

However, the tenderness of his paternal relationship was reiterated as Titus took Lavinia and held her close to him. In an interview about his work in 1995 Ninagawa suggests that he ‘always consider[s] how the body can incarnate the words that were first experienced in a reading. In order to give life to the words, we need to have complex personalities; otherwise, we won’t be able to show Shakespeare’s full range.’¹³¹ Just after his discovery of her in the text, Titus seeks a kiss from Lavinia and in doing so on the stage he shared Lavinia’s blood/ribbons, presenting her blood ties as a daughter and displaying them to the audience. Thereafter the Andronici adopted primarily prostrate poses downstage. Aaron’s entrance, clothed as a warrior drenched in crimson, to claim Titus’s hand easily dominated the group. Father and daughter displayed their wounds to the audience together. Reversing the intense activity on the stage from Act 1, the attention of the audience was drawn downwards to the dishonoured Andronici, now littering the space and sapped of energy. The final moments of this sequence constructed a family tableau covering the whole *locus* space as the heads of the sons and Titus’s hand were carried downstage. Each character from the family then played its designated part in showing the outcomes of action and reaction, surrounding a silent father overwhelmed by his grief.

Ninagawa’s setting of the family in his blocking of the action prepared the audience for Titus’s resolution to act. Whilst Marcus and Lucius grieved loudly Titus

¹³¹ Ninagawa, ‘Interview with Yukio Ninagawa, (Interview 4 July 1995 with Takahashi Yasunari, Anzai Tetsuo, Matsuoka Kazuko, Ted Matohashi, and Ian Carruthers)’, in *Performing Shakespeare In Japan*, ed. by Minami Ryuta, Ian Carruthers, John Gillies, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) pp. 208-219 (p. 215).

drew attention to himself through his silence as he gradually rose to walk upstage to deliver his 'Ha ha ha!' (3.1.262), resting against another, inanimate, hand, that of Romulus, reaching out from the she-wolf statue. The group formed a triangular hierarchical stage picture with Titus at its peak, framed by the proscenium arch. The geometrical imagery of the original lighting preset was now presented in the grouping of the bodies. Walking downstage with eyes closed against the light to signify his 'fearful slumber' (3.1.251) Titus finally gathered his family into an embrace and orchestrated their exit with Lavinia carrying his hand, and the brothers Titus and Marcus carrying the heads of Titus's sons. The Andronici were thus reunited but in the wrong order in this tender but grotesque and disturbing dumb-show.

In Richard T. Brucher's view, Titus's subsequent actions are 'not noble, but they are vigorous, witty and successful, and thus not barren.'¹³² He argues that Titus's laugh is a culmination of events conceived to delude him and suggests that at this point in the action, 'he sees most lucidly through the illusions raised by his enemies, and he acts cunningly.'¹³³ Douglas Hodge's experience of playing the part supports this critical evaluation. He points out that Titus 'gets younger as the play goes on'¹³⁴ and it is true that the physical action becomes increasingly energetic as the end approaches. In *King Lear*, a similar reversal takes place although it is concerned with Lear's understanding of the world. In losing his mind and experiencing madness, Lear becomes emotionally lucid. Deborah Willis argues that Titus's laughter 'signals the play's stylistic shift into the grotesque [...] undermining

¹³² Richard T. Brucher, 'Tragedy Laugh On : Comic Violence in *Titus Andronicus*', *Renaissance Drama* 10 (1979), 71-91 (p. 86).

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹³⁴ Douglas Hodge telephone interview, 11 December 2006.

assumptions about what is appropriate and reasonable. The vacuum created when loss combines with humiliation also creates the need for more absurd and desperate substitutions.¹³⁵ If the audience accept Titus's laugh as both rational and irrational, then it is prepared to accept increasingly grotesque and cruel humour involved in the play's retributive violence. It is a combination of the skill of the dramatist and the practitioner to bring the character in the play and the audience to this point.

Conclusion.

Analysis of these particular scenes and fragments of scenes from *Titus Andronicus* reveals the intentional and productive instability of the play's dramatic structure in more detail, showing how it complicates the experience for the audience in performance by involving it in the action through horror and laughter, sometimes simultaneously. Lucy Bailey's production at Shakespeare's Globe, the first of Dominic Dromgoole's artistic directorship, created a spectacular event that transformed the space of Shakespeare's Globe into a site where the audience played a full part in the playmaking process. It illustrated the move to involve the audience in the action of the play by extending the playing area further into the audience space from the start. At the end of the performance the audience were invited into an extended jig by the actors, acknowledging this new relationship. A celebratory mood was therefore established for the ending of the play.

Michael Boyd's intention of broadening the reach of the Royal Shakespeare Company by involving international companies and audiences in the company's work was exemplified by Ninagawa's production. By inviting the Japanese company to Britain he developed the ethos of reconfiguring the relationship between the plays

¹³⁵ Willis, "The Gnawing Vulture", p. 46.

and the spectator in the space. The methods used by the director clarify the structural purpose of the visual and spoken expression of themes embedded in the language of *Titus Andronicus* and its stage directions. In Ninagawa's production the relationship between the body and the emblematic features of the play's text that represent its epic aspect show that these elements are purposefully linked. By adhering to and adapting the directions and language of the text Lucy Bailey's approach revealed the possible range of audience responses demanded by the play in performance. In particular the links between private and public attitudes to revenge can be observed in greater detail through the directors' explorations of the play's intimate and epic dimensions. By considering the situation of the scenes in the contexts of the written text and its performance in the space, exploring the cumulative effect on the audience and comparing the outcomes with the issues raised by literary and theatrical analysis, further detail concerning the play's purposes of fusing the comic and tragic elements emerges. Institutional conditions and practices at this time responded to the demand for closer access to the play and created opportunities for engaging with it from multiple viewpoints in the performance space; a dynamic that is discussed through the uses of the actor/audience relationship in the following case study of *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Chapter Five.

Love's Labour's Lost. A 'curious-knotted garden' (1.1.239)

Tony Blair wanted to increase access to education, declaring in his party conference speech in 1996: 'Ask me my three main priorities for government, and I tell you: education, education and education.'¹ Changes to the ways in which the curriculum was accessed in schools² made some provision for considering Shakespeare's plays in the contexts of their original performance environments and those of the recent past, including audience reception. To consider how theatrical institutions responded to Blair's policies it is useful to reflect on the composition of the audience, its relationship with itself and its relationships with the characters in different kinds of plays, such as those in which the text's purpose is to evoke laughter. This chapter considers two productions of an early comedy, *Love's Labour's Lost*; a play concerned with the pursuit of education and largely set away from the restrictions of the court in the park of Navarre. Unlike *King Lear*, in which the characters succumb to the forces of Nature in order to learn much more about the development of the individual, the aristocrats in *Love's Labour's Lost* find that they are ultimately confined by the hierarchical codes of the court. In the twenty-first century, attempts have been made to update the setting and themes of the play. Kenneth Branagh's film adaptation, released in 2000³, made reference to the musical rhythms of the text by presenting it as a Hollywood musical. Michael Khan's revival of his Washington D.C production for the *Complete Works Festival* in 2006 at The Swan in Stratford-

¹ Tony Blair, 'Speech to Conference, 1 October 1996', in '*Blair: in his own words*', entry for 1996 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/3750847.stm> [accessed 13 February 2013] (quotation 5 of 7).

² Details of education policy that affected academic access to Shakespeare under the New Labour government can be accessed in Chapter Three p. 67 and in Appendix B.

³ *Love's Labour's Lost*, dir. by Kenneth Branagh (Miramax Films, 2000) (Film).

upon-Avon placed a similar emphasis on music, using intertextual reference to the psychedelic period of the Beatles when the group became interested in Eastern philosophy and spent time in India in 1968. The productions considered for this case study, however, showed a marked return to interest in the play's linguistic detail and adhered more closely to the stagecraft embedded in the text. Dominic Dromgoole's staging of the play in 2007 and Gregory Doran's in 2008 will be considered in their respective performance spaces: Shakespeare's Globe and the Royal Shakespeare Company's Courtyard Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. These two approaches to this play demonstrated different artistic visions. Dromgoole was concerned with engaging the audience by bringing the characters much further into the auditorium through the use of the thrust stage and extended platforms in the yard that were level with the lower galleries; in effect he extended the playing space to include the whole base level of the playhouse. Doran's approach was to reinvigorate the written text by adhering to the language of its spoken and physical wit in close detail. To do this he utilised the impact of other media platforms for performance, employing celebrity casting to attract a younger audience in the regions. The performance analysis focuses on the development of different characters' relationships with the audience in three key scenes: Act 1 Scene 1, Act 4 Scene 3 and Act 5 Scene 2. By highlighting the complications which form the experience of the play in the theatrical space and taking account of critical evaluations of the scenes it is possible to show how performance selects and uses the multiple perspectives provided by the written text which break its linear patterns.

Textual study of *Love's Labour's Lost* suggests that the language of the play, including the rhythm of its couplets, punning, wit and closely worked patterning of

the relationships between the aristocratic characters, establishes a sense of cohesion. However, the physical and intellectual movements of the actor in performance create an antithetical atmosphere of misrule and disruption. This mood is assimilated by the audience who interrupt the pace of the play through laughter. The development of this response is led by character or character/audience interaction rather than plot and epitomized by the courtier Berowne whose scepticism drives the comic action from the first scene. When the four lords from Navarre decide to abandon life at the court and enter the royal park, expecting that it will become a new space for learning: ‘a little academe/Still and contemplative in living art’ (1.1.13-14)⁴, their vow of abstinence from worldly pleasure is immediately tested by the arrival of the French Princess and her ladies. The aristocrats become both predator and prey by paying court to these visitors in elaborate verbal and dramatic rituals before losing favour in the name of love. As the plot develops the men find events encountered in the park increasingly difficult to control. The timing of this loss of control and its accompanying sense of disruption is created at the point when the play’s text becomes least predictable: when its rehearsed form evolves into live performance in front of an audience encountering it for the first time. The relationship between the two therefore invites closer analysis.

Berowne’s character as a productively disruptive force.

One method for considering how the dramatic structure of the text is underpinned by disruptive dramatic activity is to examine how the two productions allowed for different kinds of character interaction with the audience. Discussion of the methods used by directors to develop the relationships between actor, character and audience

⁴ William Shakespeare, *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, ed. by H. R. Woudhuysen, The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd series (London: Thomson Learning, 2001). Subsequent references are to this edition.

enables comparisons of performance from these perspectives with critical views of the play. Consideration of the presentation of Berowne, played by Trystan Gravelle⁵ and David Tennant⁶ in their respective productions at Shakespeare's Globe and the Courtyard Theatre, will be relevant since Berowne is given the responsibility of working at the margins of the play's action despite, or even because of, his status as 'one of the votaries with the King' (4.2.135-6).⁷ From his first entrance he draws the attention of his peers and the audience through his apparent disdain for Navarre's edict of abstinence from worldly pleasure. His argument that 'these are barren tasks, too hard to keep:/ Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep' (1.1.47-48) establishes him as a pragmatic realist who delights in sensual pleasure and he shapes audience resistance to oaths that are 'too hard-a-keeping' (1.1.65). As the principal character of the main plot he creates the most opportunities for interacting directly with the spectators through dramatic situation, notably with the King, Rosaline and Costard. The variety of his speech demonstrates the dramatic flexibility of his character, from the formal discourse of the court to the colloquial prose of his dialogue with country characters and also the audience.

⁵ Trystan Gravelle, actor. His presentation of Berowne emphasised a natural South Walian accent as a mark of comic and distinctive difference from Dumaine, Longaville and the King. His acting credits include performances of Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, a black comedy whose success rests on the actor's skill in timing and delivery of language and reflective pauses.

⁶ David Tennant, actor. He is known for his television role as the bachelor time-traveller Dr Who and also as the ironic, self-deprecating detective in the BBC drama *Blackpool* in which he is doomed to fall in love with the chief suspect's wife. In *Love's Labour's Lost* he used his native West Lothian accent to comic effect and to emphasise his difference from the other lords who spoke with Received Pronunciation.

⁷ Gordon Brown, who served as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1997-2007 and succeeded Tony Blair as British Prime Minister for New Labour from 2007-2010, is Glaswegian by birth, so some intertextual political reference to aspects of Berowne's character in Doran's production may be implied. I am grateful to Dr Emma Smith for the discussion on this topic.

The three scenes of *Love's Labour's Lost* considered in this case study offer an interpretation of Berowne as a productively disruptive force. In the first two Berowne's language moves freely between that of the courtier fulfilling his public role and the expression of his private thoughts addressed either directly to the audience or implied through his interaction with other characters. In Act 1 Scene 1 his challenge to the King opens up the comic possibilities of verbal wit, demonstrating the competitive spirit of life at court which is emphasised further by the arrival of potential brides. Berowne's attitudes also separate him temporarily from being part of the pattern of the main action, bringing him closer to the audience in the performance space. From this position he openly rejects the demands of compliance and struggles with the reality of his desire for Rosaline. Act 4 Scene 3 follows Berowne's soliloquy on his predicament of falling in love with her, whether this is real or imagined, and allows him to access the vertical space above the main acting area of the stage, extending contact with the galleries when he apparently climbs upwards to hide from the other lords. From this position he becomes a secret spectator in the borderland between the play and the audience, observing and commenting on his fellow suitors as they practise declaring their love in letters, sonnets and odes yet to be delivered to the women, before he returns to the horizontal plane of the stage to argue them out of keeping their oaths. The third scene, the presentation of the Nine Worthies pageant in Act 5 Scene 2, shows Berowne taking his place on the stage along with the aristocrats as part of an audience himself, thereby inviting the spectators to view him not only as one of the nobility but also as one of themselves in a deliberately metatheatrical episode. Here he is re-established as a character in a play, allowing the audience to imagine that it has had the

opportunity of developing a relationship with him – another kind of theatrical illusion and one that is shattered by Berowne's lack of empathy for the 'actors' who are the subplot characters playing the Nine Worthies. It is a moment of betrayal for the real audience outside of the play who have suspended their disbelief in the artificial conditions of performance. On the stage, the necessity of subjugating emotional truth to seamless role-playing in a court dedicated to vanity is bitterly exposed.

The situations in which the audience encounters Berowne allow it to experience much more complex reactions to the character than simply amusement. As C. L. Barber suggests: 'Berowne stands out not by not doing what all do, but by being conscious of it in a different way'⁸ which surely evokes interest and adds a further dimension to his character. His rebellious nature is clearly intimated in his declaration that he will 'swear to study so,/To know the thing I am forbid to know' (1.1.58-9). As participant and commentator, Berowne develops sources of contact and control over audience reaction and yet works credibly within his character's movement and expression during performance. By considering his characterisation from the perspectives of these three scenes as they are played, therefore, it is possible to discover the ways in which audience response is manipulated through the combined use of the stage and the actor. This will show in more detail how the interpretation of the text in performance is both responsible for, and responsive to, necessarily varied audience reaction that helps to break the patterned structure of the play's dialogue. This disruption contributes to creating productively unstable conditions which evoke laughter but also a degree of uncertainty. Bridget Escolme

⁸ C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, 2nd edn (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 91.

recognises that ‘the unpredictability of our reactions – the multiplicity of our readings, the uncertainty of our pleasure and support – are integral to the readings that the plays make possible.’⁹ She highlights the complex and necessarily unstable reactions that the audience experience towards characters during the course of performance. When the implied element of the text is experienced as disruptive, the sources of that disruption, located in the changing distances between the actor’s engagement with the text and the reception of the text through inference or deduction by the audience, become evident. In these conditions the unpredictability of audience response, especially if it is encouraged in conditions that acknowledge misrule, becomes more closely integrated with the action on the stage and is therefore part of the meaning-making process.

Locations on the stage and their impact on the presentation of character in performance.

Analysing the audience’s experience of Berowne’s character in performance is productive for testing and developing Weimann’s theories about the performative purposes of the *locus* and *platea* spaces. The uses of these areas and the tensions that occur at their boundaries are subject to their proportionate difference in the modern theatrical spaces of the Courtyard Theatre and Shakespeare’s Globe. At Shakespeare’s Globe, for example, the *locus* is the more conventionally defined space since upstage and downstage areas are clearly observed on the main stage. The *platea* area, as noted for *Titus Andronicus*, can be augmented through the use of extended thrusts in modern performance. These configurations of the space were employed in Dominic Dromgoole’s production of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and the

⁹ Escolme, *Talking to the Audience*, p. 19.

thrusts projected right out into the yard audience. They were also used as *locus* acting areas for the main action rather than for asides that address the audience directly.

Similar rearrangements of the actor/audience relationship were developed for Dromgoole's production of *King Lear* for different purposes, as the final case study demonstrates. The actors therefore had an unusually intimate relationship with some of the spectators, even when they were acting in the *locus* or world of the play and sometimes had their backs turned towards some of those watching from the yard and the lower gallery. These positions for actors facilitate moments of very close contact with sections of the audience, who may not wish this to be the case all the time. These occasions demand that the spectators temporarily lose privacy, since they are observed by others. Nevertheless, these configurations also allow for the possibility of the audience to become actors in the drama themselves. Their reactions help to inform those who cannot see the actors as fully as they would like.

By contrast, in the Courtyard Theatre the use of a thrust stage as a main acting area created a potentially larger *platea* space since it is surrounded on three sides by a seated audience who, in this case, were situated very close to the action. It became increasingly difficult to create a world for the play that had a distinctly separate *locus* from the thrust space. This had an impact on the delivery of the text, and therefore the interpretation of character by the actor and the audience. Gregory Doran notes that the Courtyard encourages 'closeness and immediacy of response [...which] is somehow much brighter, much more sparky'¹⁰. The thrust of the Courtyard Theatre provides particular conditions which facilitate actor/audience

¹⁰ Gregory Doran, interviewed by Paul Allen, in 'Director Talk: Greg Doran, Director of *Hamlet*', ed. by Suzanne Worthington. Recorded 8 August 2008, The Courtyard Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon
 < <http://stuc1974.edublogs.org/files/2011/12/2008-RSC-Greg-Doran-director-interview-22lay1o.pdf> > [accessed 15 February 2013], 1-9 (pp. 6-7).

interaction: 'You [...] have to make sure that you use the diagonals, that you don't block members of the audience. People don't mind if somebody stands in front of them as long as they don't stand in front of them for very long, or during a big speech. There's a sense of movement that this stage requires in the sense of balancing the action and also avoiding what is a big temptation, which is to just play it all up there [upstage, towards the back wall], and never really use the stage down here too [downstage, nearer the audience].'¹¹ He considers that in this space a much more direct relationship is encountered with the audience: 'You just engage instead of watching at a distance sitting out there in the dark. You have to be part of the story. At its best, that's what this theatre brings to Shakespeare'¹² This playing environment can be used to advantage when exploring the emotional mood of characters at moments; notably that of Berowne in Act 4 Scene 3 when his love for Rosaline is discovered by the other lords and he is cruelly ridiculed by them for the social disgrace of the match.

Inside the space of Shakespeare's Globe it is possible to imagine that it was not intended to address the whole auditorium all of the time in performance, thereby creating opportunities for sections of the audience to watch itself reacting to action on the stage. The seated audience in the galleries, for example, is further away from both the *locus* and the *platea* and uses the reaction of others to sense the more detailed inferences of the spoken text. The standing audience in the yard is free to establish much closer contact with both *locus* and *platea* if it chooses and can always be observed from the stage and the galleries. In performance this clearly causes some problems for the actors since they must often acknowledge the yard audience.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹² *Ibid.*

Leaning down to act to the yard inevitably minimises contact with the majority of the seated audience in the galleries who cannot read facial expression so clearly.

However, from this perspective, the fact that the yard audience is mobile and upright also implies an affinity with the characters on the stage, raising its status in the space and giving it responsibilities that do not apply to other spectators in the auditorium, thereby coercing it to stay and pay attention, which is beneficial for the audience members seated in the upper galleries. Moreover, Dromgoole strengthened this spatial relationship by extending the platforms, creating contact with the eye level of the seated spectators in the lower galleries, effectively extending the horizontal planes of the stage to include these spectators. Tentative links between these spatial relationships and the relationship between characters can also be suggested. The aristocrats needed to come forward to communicate in a much more exposed position. In the world of the play the aristocrats appear to have little connection with their rustic counterparts, although as the plot develops it becomes clear that they are in repeated and meaningful contact with them. The same could be true of the relationship between groundlings and actors in the yard space of Shakespeare's Globe. An example of this is Costard's first scene during which he delivered his lines directly to the audience in the yard, coming downstage and bending low to address it from the *platea* area.

The varied demands and needs of a modern audience can be considered in relation to the use of particular spatial areas on the stage at Shakespeare's Globe. Tim Carroll suggests that in this space the audience 'is not only capable of being

different people at different times. It can even be different people at the same time.’¹³

Compromises in terms of blocking the action and delivery of the text have to be made if the whole audience is to be effectively included, albeit at different times or for simultaneously different reactions. The ways in which this is addressed by the playwright can be observed clearly in Berowne’s character since he often presents two or more aspects of himself in the same scene, appealing to different interpretations by different sections of the audience and, unusually, uses the vertical space above the stage in Act 4 Scene 3 to do this. Tim Carroll cites Mark Rylance’s metaphorical description of the Globe audience as a body when exploring the demands of the spectators. One area, the yard, represents ‘the source of the appetite’¹⁴ or the stomach which is also where digestion begins. The middle gallery is ‘the heart, intent on the emotions of the piece’¹⁵ and the last section in the upper galleries ‘the mind, looking down [...] and appreciating the wit of the play.’¹⁶

Whether the audience demographic can be specifically located in the auditorium in this way for each performance is debatable. However, it does highlight the need to satisfy its demands from emotional, intellectual, social, political and cultural perspectives, all of which are addressed at different times in the text of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Berowne exemplifies this in his dealings not only with the lords but also in his interactions with Costard in Act 1 Scene 1 and when he appeals to the audience in his soliloquies, notably when he reflects on his own hypocrisy and declares his love for Rosaline: ‘And I, forsooth, in love!/ I, that have been love’s

¹³ Tim Carroll, ‘Practising Behaviour To His Own Shadow’, in *Shakespeare’s Globe*, ed. by Carson and Karim-Cooper, pp. 37-44 (p. 41).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

whip,/A very beadle to a humorous sigh' (3.1.169-70). The potential outcomes of his dilemma surely complicate the action by encouraging subjective and objective responses from the audience. They also invite study of the different reactions evoked in performance from different sections of the auditorium that co-exist simultaneously, as they do in the body. It is also true that Dominic Dromgoole's directorial methods deliberately brought the intellectual action of the scenes involving wordplay and wit between the aristocrats across from the *locus* of the play right into the well of the yard and towards the audience in the lower gallery and away from the stage, thereby blurring the hierarchical structures that traditionally distance sections of the audience from contact with remote aristocratic characters; a practice that he was to continue in his production of *King Lear*.

The depiction of time and space and their relationship to the main themes of the play.

The plot in the natural world of *Love's Labour's Lost* subverts expectations of freedom since the characters are caught up in the problems that they encounter there, some of which they have brought with them into the space. These include competitive attitudes linked with courtly ambition and frustration induced by a lack of true marriage prospects, highlighted by the lords' pursuit of the ladies in the park. The need to maintain social position impinged on a courtier's deepest, and deeply hidden, desires. Public revelation of desire at different points forms part of the play's disruptive element, observed in the central relationship between Berowne and Rosaline. The depiction of time and space in the park also has a heightened significance for both character and audience because these elements are governed by natural rhythms and inclinations rather than artifice. In the location of the park

aristocratic characters encounter time in a different way from their experiences of it at court where, for the individual in the sixteenth century, time spent in this kind of environment could be extended through patronage or abruptly eclipsed as a result of political change. In this sense time did not have a natural progression. Instinctively aware of the danger of desire, shown by activities of the sub-plot characters Don Armado and Costard, the lords prefer instead to repeat the rhythms of courtly life in their speech and behaviour although they are constantly interrupted by their own emotional response to situations. The narrative is complicated as a result of this distraction.

John Turner considers how the affinity between the theatrical event and the real difficulties of existing in the hierarchical Elizabethan court allowed these tensions to be debated in plays of the period. For him, the theatrical environment ‘raises in a heightened form all those questions surrounding the distinction between reality and illusion that characteristically haunted court life.’¹⁷ Shakespeare, he goes on to argue, ‘had a clear grasp of the ambiguities structured into the nature of courtly competition – ambiguities disclosed by the remarkable range of meaning that the word itself came to possess in the sixteenth century.’¹⁸ This emphasises the multiple resonances and interpretations of the spoken word in the context of theatrical performance. They remain an integral part of the process of making meaning out of the text, especially at Shakespeare’s Globe. As Mark Rylance suggests, in this spatial dynamic where some of the audience cannot see the face of the actor, the voice is

¹⁷ John Turner, ‘Introduction’, in *Shakespeare Out of Court: Dramatisations of Court Society*, by Graham Holderness, Nick Potter and John Turner (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 1-12, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

‘the only storytelling tool’¹⁹ that is reliable and it can ‘hide and reveal the soul of the play more than the face.’²⁰ In this play in particular the voice is manipulated by dissenting characters such as Berowne through the use of innuendo to develop the play’s comic ironies. John Turner’s appraisal of the play also identifies its ‘dissonances’²¹ and locates them specifically in the ‘tensions that typify the rhythms of courtly relationships in their most characteristic fields of competition, where festive pleasure and the threat of violence are never far apart: conversation.’²² This is observed in Berowne’s initial interactions with the King in Act 1 Scene 1 and the discussions amongst the lords to select Costard and Don Armado as victims for their ‘sport’ (1.1.178) of humiliation. Whilst John Turner argues that ‘the tongue rivals the eye’²³ in importance in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, analysis of the staging methods of performance demonstrates how visual stagecraft develops the necessary complications for achieving the play’s subversive impact, including deliberate distortion of the stage picture. The incongruous interaction between the lords in the park, especially when they are faced with the need to interact with the rustic characters such as Costard, provides one example. Costard clearly misunderstands aristocratic talk but parodies it, thereby involving the audience on different interpretative levels as it unravels the wordplay. His bawdy joke on being found with Jaquenetta in the maze mocks language and the contexts in which it is used, in this case the handing down of justice when he is accused of indecent behaviour:

¹⁹ Mark Rylance, ‘Research, Materials, Craft: Principles of Performance At Shakespeare’s Globe’, p. 111.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ John Turner, ‘*Love’s Labour’s Lost*: The Court at Play’, in *Shakespeare Out of Court: Dramatisations of Court Society*, by Holderness, Potter and Turner, pp. 19-48 (p. 20).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

- Costard: The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta. The manner of it is, I was taken with the manner.
- Berowne: In what manner?
- Costard: In manner and form following, sir, all those three. I was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with her upon the form, and taken following her into the park, which, put together, is 'in manner and form following'.
(1.1.199-206)

The audience has an expectation that its attention will be focused on the aristocrats for the duration of the performance but the lords' attempts to develop abstemious codes of living are constantly challenged by events and exchanges such as this that provide diverting entertainment offered by other characters. Further examples are the interactions between Don Armado and Moth, Costard and Jaquenetta and the scholastic interludes between Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel.

Staging historical topicality for a modern audience.

Barber criticises the text's concern with topicality and its focus on the spoken word, suggesting that these features 'weigh down parts of the play; it is dated by catering to a contemporary rage [...] and one that suggests that [Shakespeare] was writing for a special audience,'²⁴ probably at the Inns of Court which was well-educated enough to enjoy topical allusion and conceit. One example of a staging approach for a modern spectator is to establish a festive atmosphere of misrule that focuses on the green world as a temporary place of recreation and suspension of normality for both player and audience. Dominic Dromgoole created these conditions in the pre-set of his production at Shakespeare's Globe, making it a location that 'emphasise[d] the play's opposition of the civilised and artificial with the natural and

²⁴ Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 197.

animalistic.’²⁵ Dromgoole assigned the stage a temporary role by draping it with emblematic painted cloths to symbolise the trees in the forest and he depicted a hastily assembled playing space to introduce a metatheatrical element. Naturalistic interpretations based on visual representations of the park could not therefore be fixed and neither could interpretations of the play’s language. Staged business improvising a brief flirtation scene between life-sized deer puppets manipulated by actors allowed for interaction with the audience in the yard, in the same way in which it had been elicited in Lucy Bailey’s *Titus Andronicus*. A carnival mood was clearly established as a viewing perspective for the audience. The audience was not invited to suspend its disbelief but rather asked to acknowledge the play’s artifice and use this to develop a heightened awareness of implied meaning as the action progressed. Both actors and audience could therefore inhabit another world quite freely in these conditions.

Leo Salingar suggests that in plays such as these there is ‘more than a passing or surface connection [...] between the idea of comedy and the ideas of holiday pastime and courtly revels [...] that] constituted a kind of borderland between everyday life and the stage.’²⁶ In reality, the political implications of seasonal festivities in London could not be ignored by a courtly audience. C. L. Barber notes that at court ‘play and business were not distinct: much of the art of the courtier lay in deftly working through pleasure to profit. Anxiety and ambition were apt to be involved in the exceedingly expensive entertainments provided by noble families.’²⁷ In the city the outcome of dramatised love stories about courtiers had potentially

²⁵ Sam Marlowe, ‘The Archers Of Love Take Aim’, *The Times*, *Times 2*, 16 July 2007, p. 14.

²⁶ Leo Salingar, *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 9.

²⁷ Barber, *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy*, p. 30.

serious implications, especially if staged in the presence of the Queen who played her own game of conjugal procrastination. For the Elizabethan courtier, as the plot of the play shows us, revelry included the danger of transgressing social boundaries that were also linked with political relationships. The early performances of *Love's Labour's Lost* took place in the city or at court rather than the countryside where outdoor revels and masques that form parts of the plot, such as the Nine Worthies pageant, were used for welcoming the monarch. City performances were presented in the outdoor and indoor playhouse or court space. That is not to dismiss the significance of revels depicting rural activities, such as hunting, taking place in an urban location to entertain an aristocratic audience. Elizabeth herself had been brought up and educated in the Hertfordshire countryside under the supervision of Roger Ascham²⁸ and had learned that she was to become Queen whilst in residence at Hatfield House.

From the first scene in *Love's Labour's Lost*, ambition is tinged with a sense of predation and mortality when the King of Navarre declares his aim of achieving infamy through study 'spite of cormorant devouring Time' (1.1.4). The imagery

²⁸ David Starkey notes of Ascham: 'We get a flavour of the man from his wide and chatty correspondence and his *Schoolmaster*, published in 1570. Ostensibly the *Schoolmaster* is a book on educational method; actually it is Ascham's memoirs. And Elizabeth, Ascham's star pupil, figured heavily in both the letters and the book. Between them they offered testimonial to her achievements; they also show how early Elizabethan style was formed. And this is crucial. For with Elizabeth style was everything' (David Starkey, 'Hatfield: Further Education,' in *Elizabeth: Apprenticeship* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000), pp. 79-88 (p. 80)). Ascham also completed a treatise on hunting with the bow, *Toxophilus* (1545), for Elizabeth's father Henry VIII written, unusually, in the vernacular (<<http://www.archerylibrary.com/books/toxophilus/>>). Together, Ascham's texts link the value of husbanding academic skills with the pursuit of excellence in outdoor activity offered in the parklands adjacent to the country house. In his notes on Act 4 Sc 1 of *Love's Labour's Lost* Woudhuysen observes: 'The hunting scene can be compared to 3H6 3.1. Its subsequent references to archery (107-38) suggest an erotic undertone and a connection – through Roger Ascham's *Toxophilus* (1545) – with the art of rhetoric.' (Woudhuysen, Textual Note on 4.1, *Love's Labour's Lost*, p. 174). It is Holofernes, the schoolmaster equally content speaking verse and prose, who produces a witty comment on the Princess of France's archery skills, fashioned with the lexis of hunting: 'The preyful princess pierced and pricked a pretty pleasing pricket;/Some say a sore, but not a sore till now made sore with shooting.' (4. 2.56 -7).

foreshadows the death of the French King announced in Act 5 which interrupts the revels at the point when the lords should be cementing their relationships with the Princess of France and her entourage. Paradoxically the dark metaphor also implies life teeming with the voracious desire of hunger. It is difficult to imagine that such desire could be contained by the 'three year's term' (1.1.16) of abstinence from worldly pleasure that Navarre demands. As the lords stand at the boundary between the court and the park Berowne poses a deceptively innocent question to challenge the King's edict: 'What is the end of study, let me know?' (1.1.55) Navarre's reply: 'Why, that to know which else we should not know' (1.1.56) lacks the lustre of Berowne's open-ended curiosity. His ultimate advice to the king that 'to study now it is too late/Climb o'er the house to unlock the little gate'(1.1.108-9) offers disruptive potential in its juxtaposition of time in space, indicating his willingness to incite mischief which follows the patterns of courtly romance.²⁹ The curiosity about what *might* be if the metaphorical gate were to be unlocked is irresistible for the audience who sense the possibility of freedom and fruition in the garden that lies beyond it. Since the couplet is given to Berowne, he is also given the key.

Staging the play's plot and language for a modern audience.

The staging difficulties encountered in the need to sustain yet simultaneously disturb the character patterning in *Love's Labour's Lost* indicate a productive relationship between the disruptive potential of words, movement and timing of cues in comedy. The play is linked through its date of composition around 1595 with different experiences of love in relation to time and space expressed in the poetry of the *Sonnets* and *Venus and Adonis*. Adonis encounters difficulty in love because of his

²⁹ The image recalls medieval fabliaux and also the story of Damyan and May's cuckoldry of Januarie in Chaucer's *The Merchant's Tale*.

attitude: 'Hunting he loved, but love he laughed to scorn.'³⁰ Berowne's character reflects some of this cynicism and the audience observes his experience of love in more detail than the other characters. He describes its emotional impact through the use of aside both during his interaction with others and in soliloquy. Furthermore, the spoken word can offer an alternative interpretation to its literal meaning, either through implication or innuendo. Combinations of these in the delivery of the text of *Love's Labour's Lost* in performance therefore help to generate its destabilising power, freeing its characters from their confining codes of behaviour and speech by developing playfulness through inflection. John Dover Wilson comments that *Love's Labour's Lost* is notable for its 'extraordinary vivacity'³¹ and he contrasts perceptions of the play's formal patterned structure on the page with its effect in playing. He observes 'its constant variety [... that] can only be rightly appreciated in the theatre',³² implying that only in performance, therefore, can the multiple textures and inferences of the text be fully experienced since they need the audience to appreciate the joke.

In terms of the play's narrative structure, Miriam Gilbert notes that it 'does not have a complicated plot'³³ and that critics find the characters 'so intoxicated with language that they seem merely witty speakers rather than characters worth exploring.'³⁴ However, Harley Granville-Barker's discussion of the play for an early twentieth century audience who encountered performance in proscenium arch

³⁰ William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, The Oxford Shakespeare, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. by Colin Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 173-236.

³¹ John Dover Wilson, 'Love's Labour's Lost: The Story of a Conversion', in *Love's Labour's Lost: Critical Essays*, ed. by Felicia Hardison Londré (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.175-191 (p. 184).

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Miriam Gilbert, *Love's Labour's Lost: Shakespeare in Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

conditions presents an alternative view. 'A play's values,' he suggests, 'are human values, and a playwright's first task is to give his creatures being.'³⁵ Granville-Barker therefore begins to address the demand for multi-dimensional perspectives, including the subjective reflections of the characters, to emerge in performance. The text remained a central tool for achieving this. Shakespeare's plan, he goes on to argue, is 'to turn one or more of his creatures satirists themselves, and under their cover plant his own shafts.'³⁶ This illuminates the function of Berowne's character to some degree. In the first act the King of Navarre describes him as 'an envious sneaping frost/That bites the first-born infants of the spring' (1.1.100-101), indicating his use of language for devastating effect but linking him firmly with fertility. Berowne's response: 'Why, say I am' (1.1.102), clearly marks him as provocative and prepared to risk his status rather than acquiesce, apparently with little regard for the consequences of his actions. The final act shows him reaping the unexpected rewards of his courtly behaviour.

The dramatic purpose of the play's dark perspective.

The fact that characters' speech sometimes rings untrue directs the audience to look or listen elsewhere on the stage or in the auditorium to discover their hidden identities. The opposite may be true of a tragedy in which silence becomes another form of expression. In comedy, a tragic moment can change perception of the whole play, especially when it is used in the final stages. In *Love's Labour's Lost* the most dramatic moment underlining anxieties about mortality occurs in the final scene when Marcadé arrives to announce news that is 'heavy in [his] tongue' (5.2.713) but

³⁵ Harley Granville-Barker, '*Love's Labour's Lost*', in *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (London: Batsford, 1972), pp. 415-449 (p. 415).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

finds himself unable to complete his sentence: 'The King, your father -' (5.2.713). The Princess, still in the rhythm of the play, breaks the news to herself: 'Dead, for my life' (5.2.714), thereby creating a moment of isolation on the stage that widens the gap between friendship and duty. She indicates the loneliness of public responsibility that is observed more closely in both the histories and later tragedies. Peter Brook, in his discussion of directing *Love's Labour's Lost* in 1946, notes that with Marcadé's entrance 'the whole play changed its tone entirely. He came into an artificial world to announce a piece of news that was real.'³⁷ Brook therefore integrated this darker aspect in the design concept.³⁸ In his appraisal of the play Dominic Dromgoole also emphasises the dramatic significance of darkness in a comic scenario. He suggests that the play has a high reputation among actors because 'they love the shift in tone at the end [...] the new tone of gravity.'³⁹ Readers of the text can already detect the darker mood from the outset when Navarre, in his opening speech, reveals his purpose in achieving infamy in death by giving up worldly pleasure for study. Cheating mortal time is a noble pursuit, he tells his courtiers, when:

Th'endeavour of this present breath may buy
That honour which shall bate his scythe's keen edge,
And make us heirs of all eternity. (1.1.4-7)

Even in death status and inheritance are esteemed by the aristocrats although much of the action is spent challenging this premise as they humiliate themselves in the act of

³⁷ Peter Brook, *The Shifting Point: 40 Years of Theatrical Exploration, 1946-1987* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 11.

³⁸ Brook used Watteau's *Age of Gold* as a stimulus and linked it with the impact of Marcadé's entrance. He noted that 'every one of Watteau's pictures has an incredible melancholy ... somewhere in it there is the presence of death[....T]here's no doubt that the dark touch gives the dimension to the whole piece.' (*The Shifting Point: 40 Years of Theatrical Exploration 1946-1987* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 11.)

³⁹ Dominic Dromgoole, Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe, in Platform Discussion with Patrick Spottiswoode at Shakespeare's Globe, 17 August 2007.

courtship and are scorned by the ladies who doubt the sincerity of the love and loyalty they profess. The King's hypothesis also invites derision since eternity is a worldly concept and no-one has yet returned from beyond the grave to test its worth. Other aspects of interaction between characters in relation to Berowne in particular - including the presentation of Rosaline and her effect on him - create ironies which confound the expectation of harmonious resolution. Berowne's appraisal of Rosaline, for example, as:

A woman that is like a German clock,
Still a-repairing, ever out of frame
And never going aright [...] (3.1 185-187)

creates the prospect of disrupted rhythm that cannot be synchronised. His physical description of her as:

A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes;
Ay, and by heaven, one that will do the deed
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard (3.1.191-4)

reveals the subversive impact of her difference in terms of conventional beauty and passivity. These are irresistible qualities for Berowne that leave him subjected to her but they also emphasise the potential difficulties of her acceptability as the wife of a courtier. The uncertain outcome of their relationship, dramatised in the framework of a comedy, highlights how, as Kiernan Ryan notes, 'Shakespeare reverses the patriarchal poles of the form he is creating and defies its demand for a conjugal resolution.'⁴⁰ Even Berowne doubts his ability to achieve a harmonious relationship with Rosaline. However, this is used productively. As Ryan goes on to observe, 'none of Shakespeare's comedies confounds more effectively the still widespread

⁴⁰ Kiernan Ryan, *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 56.

view that they are congenitally disposed to disempower women.⁴¹ This is exemplified by Rosaline's control over Berowne which is maintained well beyond the end of the play when she issues her own impossible edict to him in order to win her hand. Whilst the nobles struggle with the emotional stasis that their oaths demand of them, Rosaline is described in terms of movement. She is of an enviably 'merry, nimble, stirring spirit' (5.2.16) according to Katherine, and the presentation of her as a 'light condition in a beauty dark' (5.2.20) is both seductive and liberating in that it defies definitive interpretation. Rosaline undoubtedly keeps tantalising secrets that will never be told, evidenced by her closed, mirrored response to Berowne's initial attempt to flirt with her in the following exchange:

Berowne: Did not I dance with you at Brabant once?

Rosaline: Did not I dance with you at Brabant once? (2.1.115-6)

These lines in the text link the characters inextricably together but in performance the playing of them indicate Rosaline's reluctance to be courted, simultaneously hinting at the depth of her emotional engagement with Berowne whilst endeavouring to hide it from him.

Ryan also considers that the full impact of the play has not been possible to register until conditions of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century allowed for interpretations that match the implications of open-ended relationships, such as that between Berowne and Rosaline, as they are presented in the plot. The ambiguous ending that subverts the expectation of cementing relationships through marriage is certainly one of the play's most interesting features and to ignore this renders the

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

more liberal aspects of the play powerless. One critic of Doran's production described Berowne sentimentally as 'a lone-hunter [...] tamed, almost, by love',⁴² indicating a reluctance to acknowledge the sharper observations in the text that expectation of fulfilment is notably lacking in the play's core relationships. The dominant theme is the death of love, rather than its fruition in life. In addition, for a modern reader a cultural fascination with celebrity, particularly in the artificial world of film that re-presents reality, also highlights the modern preoccupation with perfection, individuality and difference. The emulation of conformity to illusory ideals based on fashion and transient beauty ignores or disguises the effects of time and seeks to extend youth indefinitely by rejecting the responsibilities that maturity brings. This is readily understood by an audience in the recent past. Shakespeare's characters, as the ending of his play suggests, are not permitted to evade time in this way.

Shakespeare's Globe and its impact on the play's reception.

Dominic Dromgoole's production underlined the play's disruptive aspect as a positive element by presenting *Love's Labour's Lost* as part of a *Renaissance and Revolution* season at Shakespeare's Globe. He rejected previous staging practices in the proscenium arch as contributing to disaffection with the play since they create distance between the action and an audience. This is congruent with the institutional ideology of the Globe as a democratic performance space. Dromgoole suggests that by playing in daylight conditions 'the audience get excited [...] you're always aware

⁴² John Peter, 'Love's Labour's Lost', *Sunday Times, Culture Section*, 19 October 2008, p. 34.

that you're in a group and that you're a community.'⁴³ Michelle Terry⁴⁴ notes that his blocking for the stage broke with the conventional focus on the main characters by 'making sure that the space is balanced. That at any given moment an audience member will be able to see at least one member of the company.'⁴⁵ This contributes to demolishing traditional expectations of performance that make hierarchical distinctions between subplot and main plot, leading man from character actor and also actor and audience in the space. Dromgoole suggested that producing the play at Shakespeare's Globe 'could and should be very inclusive'⁴⁶ and advocated 'sharing languages with the audience [...] inviting the audience to come with you. Everybody is working out the story.'⁴⁷ The audience was therefore immersed in working out the detail of relationships not only between the four pairs of lovers but also its own relationship as audience with all of the characters. In one way this represents game-playing extended into the auditorium and in another it begins the process of discovering the individuality of each character and the range of their attitudes and values in the play.

Moreover, by behaving in the ways that the space dictates the Globe audience lends itself to challenging the notion of learning through textual study advocated by Navarre rather than through the subjective or sensual experience of the lords and ladies. These experiences are partly the result of the characters being in close proximity to the spectator. Speaking of his tenure as Artistic Director Mark Rylance

⁴³ Dominic Dromgoole, in conversation with Peter Lichtenfels
<<http://globe-education.org/discovery-space/plays/love039s-labour039s-lost-2009/production-notes/interview-with-dominic-dromgoole>> [accessed 5 April 2012] No longer available online.

⁴⁴ Michelle Terry, actor playing the Princess of France at Shakespeare's Globe.

⁴⁵ Michelle Terry, Rehearsal Notes 2
<<http://globe-education.org/communities/princess-of-france/bulletins/rehearsal-notes-2>> [accessed 1 August 2012] (para. 3 of 10)

⁴⁶ Dominic Dromgoole, Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe and director of *Love's Labour's Lost*, Platform Discussion, Shakespeare's Globe, 17 August 2007.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

suggests that the audience in the yard are literally ‘up to their necks in the physical reality of the stage’⁴⁸ and in this position little escapes its attention. Shakespeare, he also argues ‘had a particular story to tell about the hierarchical structures of consciousness [...] the senses are not to be denied but often provide the essential key to enlightenment.’⁴⁹ In *Love’s Labour’s Lost* this is particularly true of Berowne’s character and emphasised by his interaction with the subplot characters, such as Costard who react to the desire of fulfilling their physical needs much more freely, unimpeded by the constraints of class or status. The events involving subplot characters punctuate the frustrations of the main plot from the start and have instant impact on the audience at the time they are played before the action moves forward. Dromgoole’s new configuration of space that integrates the lower gallery with the yard spectators and the action on the thrust more fully facilitates exploration of this perspective of the text. Christopher Godwin’s experience of playing for a Globe audience, for example, is that the ‘nearest thing to it is street theatre [...The audience] is constantly shifting [... and] the energy of the audience [is important].’⁵⁰ As a director who had developed his skills in the spaces of fringe and street theatre Dominic Dromgoole used this energy by casting a stand-up comic in the role of Costard who instigated the business of communicating with the audience directly from the thrust staging. In the play a significant relationship is developed between Costard and Berowne who uses him as a go-between to take a love letter to Rosaline. It therefore becomes easier for Berowne to reflect some of Costard’s behaviours himself on the stage and invite the audience into a closer more informal relationship

⁴⁸ Rylance, ‘Research, Materials, Craft: Principles of Performance At Shakespeare’s Globe’, p. 111.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Christopher Godwin, actor playing Holofernes, *Talking Theatre* post-show discussion on *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, Shakespeare’s Globe, London, 22 August 2007.

with him not just through movement but also through his use of colloquial language that can be used for effect later in the action. An example of this is the beginning of Act 4 Scene 3 when Berowne prepares to spy on his fellow lords and confides in the audience.

For Dominic Dromgoole a significant part of the play's success in performance is the ability to 'set up some sort of interaction between that modernity which is the audience, who are very, very present, and the play [...] so that you've got more of a dialogue between the Renaissance and the modern age.'⁵¹ Response to the action is therefore a significant part of developing the processes of performance. At Shakespeare's Globe Dromgoole used the interactive space to advantage by using the extended thrusts in the yard, with access through the lower gallery ingress and via treads from amongst the standing audience. Irregularly shaped, yet mirror images of each other, they formed a broken maze pattern, part of the 'curious-knotted garden' (1.1.239) which was painted on them to represent the site of Costard's fornication with Jaquenetta described by Don Armado. The lords and ladies needed to stand on the maze areas to converse, sometimes across the heads of the audience but on a level with the lower gallery spectators. The effect of standing on the maze, and sometimes even jumping across it, would be clearest to those seated in the upper, middle and lower galleries, looking down on or across to the action, thereby involving the audience furthest away. Nearer the stage a different dynamic was developed. Mark Rylance identifies the kind of energy produced by the audience in the yard which 'allows the physical into the theatre, dropping it down into a physical, visceral level [...] It is so crude and that crude, chaotic cheap energy is here

⁵¹ Dominic Dromgoole in conversation with Peter Lichtenfels.

empowering the space.’⁵² This kind of audience reaction suggests a very different reception for the lords of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* which traditionally attracts audiences because of its emphasis on sophisticated word play dominated by rhythm. In this space the aristocratic characters are less protected by the patterning of the text and much more exposed to the possibility of ridicule which in turn supports Berowne’s arguments challenging the King’s edict and also his position as an outsider.

Deliberately situating the aristocrats on the extensions of the thrust established considerable difficulties for retaining their courtly composure in character. Trystan Gravelle, for example, describes the ‘serenity’⁵³ of rehearsing on the Globe stage, contrasting it with his perception of it as a ‘bear pit’⁵⁴ once the audience is in place. It is difficult to handle such energy if the actor is playing a part dressed in the formal dress of the court that demands delivery of lines in-keeping with the lexical range of the nobility that is not necessarily compatible with the emotion of the yard. Implication and innuendo become much more important as a means of establishing the true feelings of the character. The emphasis lies on intonation and a swifter pace that builds laughter. By staging some of the opening scene on the two additional thrusts of the set, therefore, it was possible to create the necessary distance between the aristocrats by setting their interactions across the divide. Viewed from the lower gallery these characters on the thrust extensions seemed to float on a sea of moving heads. This visual effect provided an impression of shifting ground beneath their feet, disrupting the overlying patterns suggested by

⁵² Rylance, ‘Research, Materials, Craft: Principles of Performance at Shakespeare’s Globe’, p. 111.

⁵³ Trystan Gravelle, Actor’s Bulletin 2
<<http://globe-education.org/communities/berowne/bulletins/rehearsal-notes-2>> [accessed 1 August 2012] (para. 3 of 10).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, (para. 4 of 10).

their costumes and the use of formal couplets for expression. It is a subtle visual spectacle juxtaposing illusion and reality that helps to inform the audience about how to receive the play as a game or dance in the context of misrule. This was particularly effective for exchanges between Berowne and the King as they engaged in their dialogues in the opening scenes together. It allowed them to keep in contact with the audience, firstly by being level with spectators in the lower gallery and nearer to those in the middle gallery and secondly by setting up routes of access to the main stage later in the play via the thrust extensions.

Developing Berowne's character in the Courtyard Theatre space.

By contrast, Gregory Doran's metatheatrical staging of the opening scene established a situation of time-wasting tranquillity as Dumaine, Berowne and Longaville lay sunbathing in the park under a pre-set lighting state that spilled over into the stalls. In this position, facing skywards, the lords could use the horizontal space of the stage to acknowledge the audience in the upper gallery furthest from the stage. A single tree dressed the set, with a backdrop of perspex leaves far upstage of it which was flown out at the start of the action. Both the audience and the actors therefore appeared to be behind this leafy curtain on the stage side of a proscenium auditorium, thus reversing a theatrical convention and adding to the idea of misrule.⁵⁵ The reflective floor on this thrust stage mirrored the actors' moves, foregrounding a sense of illusion imposed on reality, just as the court exists on a contrived sense of etiquette that proves to be its downfall when it moves to the world of the park. To complement this idea the floor space also changed colour with the lighting cues as the action progressed, contrasting with the stillness of its mirror-like qualities when all the

⁵⁵ A similar convention was used by Trevor Nunn in his production of *King Lear*.

actors were at rest between movements. Lighting the audience in the stalls also achieved the effect of reducing vocal reaction at the start, perhaps because the audience felt themselves to be watched by others or included in the action. It is more likely, however, that the closer they are to the actors the more attentive they become to the nuances of the facial gestures that accompany the spoken text. As in life, spatial intimacy allows for other signs of expression to counter the need for loud speech. In these conditions David Tennant began his first speech in conversational rather than declarative voice. Indicating the upper galleries as part of the park where he was to 'live and study here three years' (1.1.35) he acknowledged its presence and function as part of the action from the outset. Doran's casting of David Tennant encouraged audience interaction through intertextual reference. As Dr Who, Tennant plays a bachelor time-traveller unimpeded by the constraints of space yet destined to endure an infinite, restless existence that inhibits achieving fruitful long-term relationships. It is an iconic part of subtle irony that elicits empathy with a predicament over which he has ultimately little control. Tennant was also cast as Hamlet for this RSC season; another outsider in the life of the court. His comments on playing Hamlet in the Courtyard Theatre can equally be applied to Berowne: 'I'm looking forward to using the space, and using that connection with the audience. I imagine that's how those speeches [of Hamlet] were written to work. On a thrust stage you can't help but have a connection with the audience.'⁵⁶ Tennant's delivery of his opening speech as Berowne drew out its colloquial features and his lengthy pauses punctuated its textual rhythm. Tim Auld praised his 'split-second timing'⁵⁷

⁵⁶ David Tennant, Q and A for the Royal Shakespeare Company
 <<http://totallytennant.blogspot.com/2008/07/q-with-david-about-hamlet-and-loves.html>>
 [accessed 1 August 2012], (para. 9 of 12).

⁵⁷ Tim Auld, 'Love's Labour's Lost', *Sunday Telegraph*, 19 October 2008, p. 30.

and the success of his ‘cocky off-piste asides to the audience’.⁵⁸ The audience was intent on hearing him offer his first challenge but also waiting for his inevitable capitulation and change in fortune. Throughout the first scene Tennant broke the formal picture of the setting by strolling around the stage and addressing individual spectators, soliciting support for his point of view. He used the diagonal space on the stage so that he could cross from one side to the other but still maintain contact with each side of the auditorium as he did so. As he read the outrageous demands of the edict aloud he playacted in and out of character. When the King signalled his rejection of him: ‘Well sit you out. Go home Berowne: adieu’ (1.1.110) his deft clowning business of throwing his hat across the stage to hang it on a tree branch, followed by an affirmative ‘No, my good lord, I have sworn to stay with you’ (1.1.111) earned him a round of applause. This audibly established Berowne as an entertainer and also instigated reaction from the auditorium to his gestures as part of the action of the play. In doing this he acknowledged and deflected the temporary personal defeat suggested by his response to the King but also opened an alternative route of communication with the audience.

The swift delivery of the text highlights the sophistication of the lords and ladies. It also develops the rhythm and pace that signifies the comic dimensions of frustration in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* as the exchanges build and break with laughter. The text’s use of language for flirtation is a key feature; keeping face rather than enduring humiliation forms the basis of courtship games that require the use of wit. It is a skill accorded to the ladies rather than the men and acknowledged by Boyet: ‘Their conceits have wings/Fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought, swifter

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

things' (5.2.260 -1). The lines imply that the thought behind the spoken text runs congruent with its delivery rather than following behind. The speed of comic timing temporarily suppresses reflection and encourages immediate response in the auditorium. Berowne's ability in punning suggests that the ladies might find this an attractive aspect of his personality; this is certainly true of the audience. However, this is eagerly dispelled by Rosaline who seeks to keep her distance from him, despite the fact that he matches her as an outsider. It is not until Act 4 Scene 3 that the more serious purpose of his linguistic aptitude becomes clear when Berowne urges the lords to forswear their oaths in order to find themselves and thus prove worthy of the kind of love that they can only find in women. It is the poor command of language by the lords that leaves them most vulnerable to Berowne's scorn. Conversely, their derision of Rosaline's physical darkness that he finds so irresistible reveals the extent of their ruthless cruelty and snobbery.

Berowne's character as the embodiment of *locus* and *platea*. Act 4 Scene 3.

Whilst the *locus* and *platea* of the theatrical space demand particular methods of interaction between the characters and the audience, the occasions for developing these within the physical body of the actor are explored in Act 4 Scene 3. When the hunt is at its height, Berowne steps out of the action to address the audience. He speaks in public and private modes of address, sometimes overlapping them in different situations. In solitude he reverts to prose that can be interpreted as stream of consciousness by a modern audience. He considers his emotional state in relation to Rosaline and his feelings are erratic and chaotic as his expression of the following mood illustrates:

I will not love; if
 I do hang me! I'faith I will not. O, but her eye! By this
 light, but for her eye, I would not love her – yes, for her
 two eyes. Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and lie
 in my throat. By heaven, I do love, and it hath taught
 me to rhyme and to be melancholy. (4.3.7-12)

Poetry, he declares, induces sadness and frustration. This is used to comic effect in the rest of the scene where an indulgence in rhyme produces both delight and laughter in the audience when the other three lords appear to read the sonnets, odes and letters they have written for the ladies. By allowing Berowne to hide himself to observe them from a location above the stage, a significant piece of stage blocking revealed in his declaration: 'Like a demi-god here sit I in the sky/And wretched fools' secrets heedfully o'er-eye' (4.3.76-77), markedly different perspectives on the scene and of Berowne are developed. These perspectives invite contemplation of Berowne's status in the play as he sits in the vertical space of the theatre above the King who appears on the stage. The textual simile and spatial metaphor, however, places him in relation to the whole universe, effectively distorting perspective in one brief but memorable couplet that temporarily takes him out of the physical context of his immediate position on the stage in the play and gives him the freedom that infinity offers.

Having chosen his vantage point, Berowne matches his position with his choice of comparison, instantly transforming himself from a man who can hardly follow his thoughts through to a courtier describing himself as a 'demi-god' (4.3.76) delighted by the prospect of spying on the follies of his peers and the ensuing game that this might produce. This position is the natural domain of his ego from where he mockingly observes the truth about the ways of the courtly world. Speaking to the audience throughout most of the scene, he invites them to exercise their judgement

on the veracity of the lords' declarations of love as well as evoking scorn. The spectators in the top tier of the galleries are empowered because they are even higher than he is in the stage picture. This use of space recreates the play's spirit of misrule in which the strict observance of hierarchies is temporarily suspended for the delight of those partaking in revelry. Because the audience in the lower galleries and at lower ground level have to look up, the scene is literally lifted away from the traffic on the stage and the audience becomes more acutely aware of its own involvement in the play. This is also demonstrated by the fact that audible reaction to the scene in the form of building laughter becomes a dominant feature, suggesting that it has been contrived by the playwright through the placement of the actors and the swift reaction to cues rather than purely linear follow-through to develop the plot. The appeal of these performance conditions which give the audience significantly higher status than the courtiers and royal figures represented on stage becomes clearer. The whole space becomes a more democratic environment as the power shifts.

At Shakespeare's Globe the stage blocking for Act 4 Scene 3 emphasised inclusivity and the interactive role of the audience. The puppet-deer from the preset for Act 1 Scene 1 became part of stage business again, this time hunted through the auditorium, up the extension thrusts and across the diagonal space of the stage. The movement highlighted the circular aspect of the space. The audience had to assimilate the extended dimensions of the whole auditorium as a playing area when the actors entered for the chase. These conditions were similar to those set up in *Titus Andronicus*. Berowne came to rest onstage alone and gave an impromptu address before climbing up by the side of the musicians' gallery to observe the arrival of the king who approached through the yard area and up the steps of the thrust. As the

other lords arrived they created comic business of ‘hiding’ on the bare stage in order to hear each other read their epistles of love to the ladies in the *locus* space, apparently oblivious to the audience. This business was deliberately over-exaggerated so that at points the characters were literally on top of each other, or underneath and in reality could not have failed to be seen by each other. Berowne sets this up in the text as a child’s game: ‘All hid, all hid, an old infant play’ (4.3.74). This gave licence to the actors to overact and even temporarily suspend their own characters in the performance; an illusion that highlights the artificiality of playmaking in performance. It also gives temporary consent to the audience to react differently to what it sees, allowing it to follow the actors’ cues and step out of the timeframe of the play. In addition, at Shakespeare’s Globe much business was set on the extension thrusts, allowing the lords to jump across the audience and even into the yard at points during the scene to escape humiliation by the King. This carefully orchestrated chaos emphasised the revelry that runs throughout the play, temporarily disrupting the conventions of audience/actor relationships.

The emphasis on delight lightens the mood before it drops for Berowne’s more serious speech on the nature of love later in the scene. Although he works towards affinity with the audience Berowne is quick to manipulate the relationship to scorn the letters of the lords before descending the tree – or in this case the gallery – to challenge them to forswear their oaths. The lords’ leaden verse invites Berowne’s derision, implied by his completion of couplets for the benefit of the audience as indicated by the following exchange:

Dumaine: Once more I’ll read the ode that I have writ.

Berowne: Once more I’ll mark how love can vary wit. (4.3.96-7)

The lords are clearly doomed to failure if they try to win their loves' hands through written protestations of love and their secret desires are made public. By the time the reaction of laughter to the comic business of hiding subsides the audience is well prepared for the surprise of Berowne's interruption: 'Now step I forth to whip hypocrisy' (4.3.148) that uses sudden revelation, mirroring Marcadé's entrance at the height of the argument between the lords and the ladies in Act 5. When Berowne appears here, the lords are at their most vulnerable but his re-entry onto the main stage is quickly followed by the discovery that Berowne himself is in love with Rosaline. His ironic declaration 'I that am honest' (4.3.174) as he admonishes the lords, therefore, invariably receives an appreciative response, indicating that the audience already has some understanding of the different textures of Berowne's character and more importantly understands the difference between truth and delusion.

Gregory Doran's staging of Act 4 Scene 3 at The Courtyard Theatre.

Gregory Doran's realisation of the overhearing scene at the Courtyard Theatre shows how the dynamics of modern staging enhance the play's implied impact. Since the Courtyard stage is open to the audience and accessible from different parts of the auditorium this enables the actors to enter and exit from a variety of locations and maintain a sense of continuous flowing traffic on the stage; a contrast with traditional proscenium arch practice that separates action from audience and confines the actors to static resting places. Set sequences can be built up more gradually and subtly so that the denouement seems less contrived. The focus for the audience can be expanded across the whole stage area, giving emphasis to other characters; a useful device that also helps to establish the weight of the subplot and draw out its

implications. Whilst Berowne and the King used the tree to hide in full view of the audience, Longaville made his entrance from a down stage gangway up across the thrust area, drawing attention to his sonneteering. Berowne's pedantic commentary on the worth of Longaville's efforts: 'God amend us. God amend us. We are much out of the way' (4.3.73) emphasised the physical joke of his own position but also directly addressed the audience secreted in the auditorium, in effect doubling the perspective. Once this was established, further manipulation of stage conventions could be developed. Doran also used the conventions of comic interlude that had been set up in the subplot business between Don Armado and Moth⁵⁹, allowing the lords to descend unwittingly into comedy. This suited the audience mood for game-playing evoked by Berowne at the top of the scene. Dumaine, for example, sang his sonnet as if in a solitary rehearsal, accompanying himself on a tiny guitar that echoed the difference in sizes that is observed elsewhere in the characters of Don Armado, who is mocked for his declarations of love for Jaquenetta, and his minute servant Moth. This stage business also allowed the links between all of the lords to be maintained on one level whilst denied on another since they each began to sing in harmony, presenting a performance within Dumaine's performance of his sonnet with the precision of a barbershop quartet that Dumaine himself could not apparently hear. The events of the play from this point in the text are orchestrated so that the lords reveal themselves to each other in turn, concluding with Berowne's descent from the tree or hidden location. It relies on consummate timing and, as Doran suggests, demands intuitive responses to the text. He acknowledges that '[i]f you

⁵⁹ These two characters were dressed alike. Their costumes were also noticeably aristocratic, whereas there was a distinct difference in the type of dress between Don Armado, Moth and the lords at Shakespeare's Globe.

have a good cast most of your work is done'⁶⁰ but is also clear that 'to pitch the playfulness of the piece, to allow it to rise with lightness and air, takes a lot of work.'⁶¹ The business at this point in the action at the Courtyard Theatre was trumped only by Berowne crossing the stage to take his own letter from Costard and, swiftly retreating to the *locus* area of the tree, try to eat it, thereby eating his own words. It was left to the other lords to try rescue his 'toy' (4.3.197) to piece together the contents – a moment when the timing on stage returned to the frame of the play-world and lagged behind the spoken text whilst the audience waited in anticipation slightly ahead of the action for the lords' inevitable retributive reaction. Thus, the meaning-making process is dependent on a shared responsibility in the playing space. It is a combination of the text, its delivery by the actor playing in and out of character and audience reaction at specific moments and for specific purposes. In these conditions, visual jokes using space are used to comic effect. As the discussion of the use of space in *King Lear* will show, playing with perspectives can also be used to dramatic comic effect in the conditions of tragedy. The hierarchical relationships are only temporarily restored on the stage in the text when the King realises that Berowne is over-zealous and asks him: 'Whither away so fast?' (4.3.183) This is an apparently insignificant line in the text but one which, laced with the intuitive recognition of incrimination, can instantly restore the King's position as a knowing ruler over his unruly courtier in performance. The only course of action left to Berowne is to rely on his own rhetoric to argue the lords into forswearing their oaths in the hope of winning their women. His soliloquy convinces the observer

⁶⁰ Gregory Doran, 'Approaching Love's Labour's: Reflections by Gregory Doran', in *The RSC Shakespeare, William Shakespeare, Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2008), pp. 158-160 (p. 159).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

through the impact of its lyricism in performance that contrasts with the ineptitude of the lords' sonnets. It is a set piece that the audience wait for, especially at the Courtyard Theatre where it was received in attentive silence. It had noticeably less impact at Shakespeare's Globe where the focus had rested on his colloquial prose, although it should be noted that Tennant's skills in language and characterisation in addition to the high level of audience interest in him as a celebrity were difficult to match.

Berowne, now descended from his demi-god status, places the esteem of women higher than oaths of abstinence, declaring that only love allows a full understanding of the world. Love 'first learned in a lady's eyes' (4.3.301) 'gives to every power a double power,/Above their function and their offices' (4.3.302-3). Love's intelligence, he assures the lords and the audience, is supreme in its unique effect; it 'adds a precious seeing to the eye:/A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind' (4.3.307-8). His speech, focusing on nourishment and fulfilment, is the most lyrical in the play and concludes with an irresistible offer to save face and develop a sense of self that breaks with the repetitive tedium of group activity whose reward can only be obscurity: 'Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves,/Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths' (4.3.335-6). Berowne's final assault on the lords' self-delusional sense of loyalty that is ultimately based on the desire for preferment uses reference to courtly ideals of chivalry that he knows are past their prime in the context of the present. He appeals to their sense of duty and righteousness by asking: 'And who can sever love from charity?' (4.3.339), setting off a military response in the lords to engage in battle to win the hands of the ladies. The line clearly resonates with the audience by creating such a physical reaction. Its insincerity in the mouth of

Berowne, however, proves doubly ironic for him as he will ultimately forfeit Rosaline's hand if he fails to follow his own advice in this specific detail at the play's conclusion. In the passionate heat of the moment it is easy to overlook the predatory resurfacing of Berowne's cynical gloating over his powers of manipulation, expressed in his final aside to the audience after his companions have left the stage: 'Sowed cockle reaped no corn'(4.3.357). This was omitted from the Royal Shakespeare Company's production and therefore created a false sense of hope derived from a desire for the lords to relinquish playing with emotion and begin to truly engage with it. In the play's text, however, the line diminishes Berowne's power, eliciting a sceptical reaction to his motives, thereby allowing the full effect of the play's conclusion to develop.

Berowne's interaction with the Nine Worthies. Act 5 Scene 2.

If Berowne's lyricism allows him to manipulate the responses of the other characters and the audience, how does less formal revelry prepare for the inevitable partings that dominate the climax without disappointing the spectator? The presentation of the Nine Worthies pageant serves a distinct purpose in relation to Berowne since his reactions to it break the ties that he has developed with the audience. In effect he turns his back on the spectator during the pageant, an action that any soldier-courtier would instinctively interpret as a vulnerable position. In doing so Berowne is allowed to betray and enlighten the audience simultaneously, revealing the poignant truth of his character as a man whose status in the aristocratic world dooms him to a loveless life dedicated to verbal cruelty. The object of his affection, Rosaline, reveals the pitiless extent of his future as a character in the dramatic context of the play and in the reality of the performance by describing the fate of the comic role-player:

A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
Of him that makes it. (5.2.849-51)

His function as court wit is an aspect of his character that he should discard at this point yet it serves to extinguish the opportunity of developing productive commitment that both he and the audience sense would nourish him. The dramatic context of the performance of the Nine Worthies is chosen to explore his predicament and thereby highlights its significance for the real audience.

Agnes Heller suggests that at court and in wider society '[t]he individual could realize himself only *against* others. Thus Renaissance individuality was always a form of individualism, and its motive force was egotism. Hatred, envy, jealousy of those who had done better or might do better was no small part of the Renaissance personality.'⁶² It is predictable that the lords are unable to relinquish these competitive attitudes, especially when asked to act as audience to representations of heroes drawn from the classical literary world who symbolise achievement, played by their social inferiors who nevertheless manage to achieve a considerable degree of satisfaction from life. Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel, for example, have recently received cordial hospitality at the home of a former student at the end of Act 4 Scene 2 before rehearsing the pageant. This conviviality contrasts with the reception of their efforts to entertain the lords in the final act. Don Armado and Costard also spend much of the action seeking and receiving sexual gratification from Jaquenetta; an obvious source of contention for the lords. Richard David explores the historical context of the reception of the Nine Worthies, in which these male characters are involved, thereby illuminating the possible effect of the pageant in modern

⁶² Agnes Heller, *Renaissance Man*, trans. by Richard E. Allen (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 199.

performance. He notes that entertainments staged for Elizabeth on her ‘progress’⁶³ to the country house often consisted of ‘a play presented in all earnestness by the local talent (often led by the schoolmaster) to be duly mocked by the Queen and her retinue with all the brutality accorded here to Holofernes’s pageant’⁶⁴ and shows the true purpose of producing a play-within-a-play as an opportunity to display cruel superiority over others. It is clear from both recent productions that this practice of playmaking within the play has withstood the test of theatrical time and that directors choose to extend performance by including precise stagings of the Nine Worthies that are faithful to the text.

In the play poor role-playing is a key method for evoking cynical criticism whilst disruption resulting from sexual frustration and anger is demonstrably one of the pageant’s structural features. Dominic Dromgoole prepared particular audience reception of the Nine Worthies by making repeated reference to peripheral aspects of performance such as amateur game-playing throughout his staging. He also allowed the aristocratic ladies to feed the audience with the picnic they had prepared for the entertainment, making a competitive game of its distribution and praising well-caught scraps. Contrastingly, Gregory Doran used the large foyer of the Courtyard Theatre to begin the second half of the play with a Morris dance and followed this with a procession onto the main stage where impromptu clog dancing took place before resuming the main action. The outside world and the presence of the audience was therefore emphasised as a perspective of the performance since the focus on the actors was temporarily suspended for these interludes.

⁶³ R.W. David, ‘Introduction’ to *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, ed. by R.W. David, The Arden Shakespeare, 5th edn (New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. xiii-xliv (p. xxxii).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Richard David suggests that whilst the action of the Nine Worthies may detract from the symmetry of the play's structure 'it is precisely this [aspect], with its recollection of Elizabeth's *al fresco* diversions, that gives the play its delightful air of formal informality.'⁶⁵ However, this is not necessarily supported by the text; the underlying tone in playing the scene presents a perspective on the occasion which is neither delightful nor informal but competitive. Terry Hands suggests that 'the pageant of the Nine Worthies reveals not only the unworthiness of the performers, but unworthiness within the aristocratic audience commenting upon them.'⁶⁶ He argues that in presenting it Shakespeare was reminding the aristocratic audience that 'generosity is learned not born',⁶⁷ indicating that the effect of the narrative focuses once again on the attitudes of the lords rather than the pageant. Doran extends this interpretation, suggesting that the pageant has a particular structural meaning, linking its impact with *The Mousetrap* in *Hamlet* as 'reminders to the audience of the process of theatre-making, and the different levels of reality and artifice.'⁶⁸ As the plot unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that the deepest criticism of the performers is that they play their parts unconvincingly or that they are miscast in their roles – the two most pertinent shortcomings that affect the lords themselves in their green world. Nevertheless, character reaction to the Nine Worthies serves as a productive indicator of the degree of change in the dispositions of the lords as the play moves towards its conclusion, helping to foreshadow the lack of resolution in terms of relationships.

⁶⁵ David, 'Introduction', p. xxxii.

⁶⁶ Terry Hands, theatre director. 'The Director's Cut: (Interviews by Jonathan Bate and Kevin Wright): Terry Hands and Liz Shipman', in *The RSC Shakespeare: William Shakespeare, Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2008), pp. 147-60 (p. 156).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Doran, 'Approaching Love's Labour's: Reflections by Gregory Doran', p. 159.

In advance of the play-within-the-play it is Berowne who uncovers the Princess's 'trick' (5.2.460) of forestalling the lords' presentation of themselves as Muscovite wooers by allowing her women to role-play each other in disguise and 'dash it like a Christmas comedy' (5.2.462). He sets up both the underlying tone of anger and conditions for retribution that can be carried out within the bounds of revelry. Creating the opportunity for the lords and ladies to sit as part of an audience also allows them to express their current anxieties. The King, for example, shows concern that the players will outshine the lords whose efforts to entertain as Muscovites have been ridiculed by the ladies: 'Berowne, they will shame us. Let them not approach' (5.2.509). Whilst Navarre does not wish to lose face, Berowne - a seasoned player in such mischief - reassures him that the custom is for the play to be badly performed: 'tis some policy/To have one show worse than the King's and his company' (5.2.510-11). The Princess's retort to the King: '[L]et me o'er rule you now./That sport best pleases that doth least know how' (5.2.514) reveals the predatory nature thinly concealed beneath her manners and raises expectation of an argument over reception of the pageant that inevitably follows. The men are satisfyingly trapped into enduring a performance by those whom they have ridiculed whilst offering entertainment to their guests who have no previous knowledge of the players. This inevitably provides different perspectives on the conditions in which hospitality is offered and received.

In both productions, the Nine Worthies offered the opportunity for the lords and ladies to remain seated and comparatively static whilst the subplot characters were free to enter and circulate as their respective characters. The setting of Dromgoole's production, established as a temporary playing space, enabled the play-

within-the-play to be staged as a realistic continuation of events; Costard sustained his role as a crowd-pleaser taking centre-stage to show his skills and contest Berowne's criticism of him. Berowne offered his resistance to the role of passive spectator in response to Costard's Pompey: 'You lie, you are not he' (5.2.434), transgressing the theatrical conventions of suspending disbelief. Credibility, it seems, is of the utmost importance to Berowne in his self-conscious, artificial role of courtier/spectator. At this point he begins a structural pattern of interruption which blurs the distinction between audience and actor but also leads to the revelation of his insecurity. Each of the Worthies offers provocative visual statements that can be interpreted in a variety of ways in the implied content of the activity on the stage to this point, from Moth's diminutive Hercules wrestling with his inanimate phallic snake (brought to uncontrollable life only by himself) to Don Armado's failed soldier parading as Hector. These comic interpretations are simple *tableaux vivants* offering challenging symbols of the most vulnerable male weaknesses to a courtly audience. However, it is Berowne's reaction to Costard as Pompey that is most memorable, not because of its cruelty but because of its uncompromising nature. It distinguishes Berowne from the other lords and makes him an outsider but also gains the audience's appreciation of him as a truth-teller.

Stage blocking which set the lords and ladies reclining together on cushions in the downstage area of the thrust stage in the Courtyard Theatre provided a deceptively relaxed atmosphere that was at odds with the critical attitudes of the lords towards the Worthies. The presentation of them, as evidenced in other plays within action, such as Pyramus and Thisbe in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, reveals the care taken with costume and staging that are necessary features of working in a

space where the seated audience are so close to the stage. In the case of the Nine Worthies the characters were deliberately inhibited by their comic masque costumes, such as a hobby-horse prop worn on the body to add to the sense of ridicule. The pageant characters here also made their entrances from the gangways, leading on from the auditorium to create a procession that came to rest on the stage surrounded by the lords and ladies, thereby providing a sense of choreographed entrapment that ultimately ensnared them. Only Berowne, moving freely on the stage, was allowed to deliver his comments on the action from a relatively commanding position. At the height of the conflict between Costard and Don Armado over Jaquenetta, Berowne placed a white handkerchief on the Spaniard's lance in provocative courtly fashion. As a stage picture, the implications were clear and the necessary break into intense activity on the stage in preparation for battle could commence, masking Marcadé's entrance. The production at Shakespeare's Globe also capitalised on the physicality of the final moments, allowing the activity on the stage to spill over into the auditorium as the picnic descended into chaos with food used as weaponry. This inevitably engaged the audience in a riotous response that was abruptly halted by the announcement of the French King's death. The bickering between the lords and ladies was therefore brought to an abrupt conclusion by the prospect of change in the hierarchy of the court.

Conclusion.

The analysis of these scenes and their textual and spatial contexts in different performance spaces demonstrates different features of their processes. The intense interplay between the actors and the audience during performance is necessary for the play's comic dimensions to emerge. The disruptive aspects of misrule in

conjunction with the formal patterns of language and the structure of the play's text reveal the extent of frustration that lies beneath the surface of spoken discourse between characters. This is most clearly observed in the characterisation of Berowne who is presented as both courtier and outsider; a role that the character of Edmund is to develop in the later tragedy of *King Lear*. Berowne is instrumental in involving the spectator in the action. Director-led interpretations of the text in modern performance conditions, such as the ways in which the actors are positioned in relation to the audience and each other, or changing how the hierarchies are presented and disrupted through stage business, encourage the audience to become more physically and intellectually involved in the action. The staging conditions at Shakespeare's Globe and the Courtyard Theatre, for example, fostered Berowne's ability to establish contact with the audience on a variety of physical and intellectual levels in the auditorium and show that a range of responses to action can be experienced simultaneously. The role of the comic actor is to set up and manipulate the spectators' responses for the purpose of illuminating further perspectives of the play's plot. The stage business deliberately creates problems that the director and actors develop in performance, allowing a variety of responses to the text to emerge. These complications support and extend critical accounts of the play from several perspectives. The most significant of these is the acknowledgement of the individual experience of restrictive artificial hierarchies imposed by a courtly existence that insists on obedience and compliance. However, in presenting this kind of world in the context of misrule and potentially alienating the audience from Berowne in the final stages of the pageant, the fragility of this artificial way of life and the effort involved in creating it is revealed. In these moments on the stage when the death of

the Princess's father is announced a reminder of the limits of mortal time is superimposed on the action and this allows the potential capacity of human kindness to surface. It would be cynical to dismiss the sincerity with which Berowne asks Rosaline:

[...] Mistress, look on me.
Behold the window of my heart, mine eye,
What humble suit attends thy answer there.
Impose some service on me for thy love. (5.2.829-32)

Even if, as Berowne observes, 'Jack hath not Jill' (5.2.867) at the play's conclusion this is of little consequence when compared with the developing sense of his commitment to Rosaline. The possible future outcome of the play for the characters crosses from the artificial world of the stage into the reality of the auditorium and into the imagination of the audience who receive it with uncertainty but a sense of trust in its veracity.

Whilst Berowne's work as a character on the stage can be productively compared with Edmund in *King Lear* in terms of the way he creates different perspectives for the audience to view what happens in the plot, aspects of staging suggested by the text can also be traced in the later play. Berowne's ability to cross the threshold of the *locus* and *platea* areas is one example. In *King Lear* this is developed in a more sophisticated way by Edmund to explore the darker aspects of living within the strict social and political codes of the court. In addition, more open staging conditions in the productions discussed in this case study allowed further development of perspectival work on the text in the vertical spaces above the stage. Berowne's ascent into the tree at the Courtyard Theatre to observe the antics of the lords created contact with the audience in the upper gallery but it also offered a unique perspective on the courtiers' behaviour amongst themselves. This aspect of

playing with audience viewing perspectives for a symbolic purpose is developed in *King Lear* in the scene at Dover Beach for more tragic purposes which suit the epic scale of the narrative. The exploration and discussion of the staging conditions of *Love's Labour's Lost* in the recent past, therefore, encourages consideration of similar spatial relationships in other plays. In both of the productions of *Love's Labour's Lost*, fuller use of the text by practitioners has enriched the staging process and the experience of the audience. In particular, adherence to suggested positions on the stage, as in *Titus Andronicus*, shows an awareness of how it is possible to involve the spectators furthest away through the use of sections of the audience and also the vertical areas above the playing space.

The commercial and artistic success of Dromgoole's production, evidenced in its after-life as a touring production to the United States and its release on DVD, indirectly supported the ideology of Blairite policies of democratising education and providing intellectual access to a wide audience. Doran's production developed less accessible aspects of the play, such as the Nine Worthies pageant, and in doing so he confronted the audience with Berowne's ultimate refusal to follow his own desire and break with long established social and cultural traditions of the court. Doran's casting of a household celebrity encouraged a potential audience to view Berowne as an accessible character. The use of the stage space and the whole auditorium in both productions served to democratise the theatrical space, engaging the audience in intellectual reflection developed through a closer physical relationship with the action on the stage. By interacting in this way, the problems involved in living in the social and cultural structures of the sixteenth century court, and in the conditions of the recent past, are made more fully accessible for the audience through its

experience of the performance. The dramatic processes of a play previously considered to be confined by the time in which it was originally conceived are clarified for the reader and spectator of the twenty-first century. In particular, the frustrations associated with the lives of those in power at court struggling to maintain and control a strictly hierarchical patriarchal society, are revealed in more detail. Developing understanding of these public and private perspectives in traditionally popular plays, such as *King Henry V*, which deals with the conflict between the public role and the private emotional responses of the individual to duty, is the topic of the next chapter. In considering a history play in the multicultural, globalised performance conditions of the recent past, the perception of history itself necessarily undergoes change.

Chapter Six.

King Henry V. The 'lovely bully' (4.1.46)

Tony Blair's uncompromising foreign policy concerning the Middle East placed his leadership under stress. His decision to intervene in Iraq in 2003, which coincided with Nicholas Hytner's production of *Henry V* on the Olivier stage of the Royal National Theatre, was to cost him the huge majority he enjoyed when coming to power in 1997. By June 2007, as Michael Boyd produced his version of *Henry V* for the Courtyard Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, as part of the *Histories Cycle*, Blair was to stand down as Prime Minister. Attitudes to leadership were under intense scrutiny during the first decade of the millennium. However, Blair's public appeal as a charismatic leader remained one of the defining features of his time in office.

Whilst he was a commoner the prime minister was, in some respects, comparable to Shakespeare's Henry V since he too was young, religious, ambitious, powerful and involved in war. His early political popularity was also linked with a princess; in his case Princess Diana. On her death in Paris in August 1997 he had paid chivalrous respects to her by naming her 'the People's Princess'¹, helping to heal an emerging rift between the royal family and the public.² Blair was a broker for peace in Northern Ireland and sent the British army to monitor Serbian aggression in Bosnia but his refusal to comply with the demands of the United Nations Security Council

¹ Tony Blair, Televised Speech on the Death of Diana, Princess of Wales, 31 August, 1997, BBC News <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/politics97/diana/blairreact.html> > [accessed 27 May 2012] (para. 7 of 11).

² The Queen responded in kind. In a televised broadcast she addressed the nation in patriotic and maternal terms on behalf of Princes William and Harry: 'We have all felt the emotion of the past few days. So what I say to you now, as your Queen and as a grandmother, I say from my heart.' ('Speech following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, 5 September 1997' <<http://www.royal.gov.uk/ImagesandBroadcasts/Historic%20speeches%20and%20broadcasts/DeathofDianaPrincessofWales5September1997.aspx> > [accessed 12 August 2012], (para. 2 of 9)).

over Iraq challenged his political popularity. Both of the productions discussed in this chapter made reference to Blair's republican-style leadership and broke with late twentieth century traditional views of Henry V as a patriot, focusing instead on the difficulties facing the man who struggled in the roles of king and military leader that he found himself playing.

In discussing how far performances of *King Henry V* inform us about attitudes to leadership presented in Henry's campaign in France it is productive to consult scenes from the play which reveal his character as a man and a king and analyse them in their written, theatrical and political contexts. By doing so inconsistencies materialize about 'warlike Harry' (1.0.5)³ over the course of the play. An overview of recent productions in the play's performance history contextualizes the case study. Additionally, the role of the theatrical ideologies of the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company in shaping production practice at this time is discussed and the responses of the directors to the changing political climate are explored. Close textual analysis and critical views of selected scenes, in particular Act 2 Scene 1, are included prior to the analysis of performance to show how they reflect the problematic aspects of Henry's character. The scenes discussed in this chapter: the introduction of the Eastcheap characters in Act 2 Scene 1, Henry's address to the Governor of Harfleur in Act 3 Scene 4 and his wooing of Katherine in Act 5 Scene 2, contradict the image of Henry as entirely virtuous, waging war with a unified force in order to create peace and prosperity. This leads the reader and the audience to consider the real problems facing Henry's rule and the unrealistic demands that the existing political and social structure places on the

³ William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, ed. by Andrew Gurr, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, updated edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Subsequent references are to this edition.

individual who takes power. Evidence discussed in this chapter contributes to the wider discussion of the struggle of the individual to flourish in patriarchal hierarchies.

The Chorus describes Henry as '[t]his star of England' (5.3.6) although the metaphor implies mutability. Whilst stars shine brightest in the darkest hours they fade at dawn. Shakespeare created recurring opportunities for the audience to question the efficacy of the king's attributes as a leader, particularly in scenes that appear to be concerned with healing rifts, brokering peace and creating union through marriage. Hazlitt's oxymoronic appraisal of Shakespeare's theatrical Henry as an 'amiable monster'⁴ suggests contrary personal qualities in his character. The Chorus advises wariness of the representation of the medieval monarch and his delight in war on the stage, urging the spectator: 'Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts' (Prologue: 23). Chris Fitter supports this approach, noting with reference to *Henry V* that Shakespeare 'preserved a subversive subtext within dramas outwardly supportive of traditional authority and harmonic in finale.'⁵ This is revealed not only in the text of *King Henry V* but also in the contexts of original and recent performance. Anne Barton argues that the text does not favour any particular reading: 'Within the play itself, Shakespeare suggests, without indicating priority, a multiplicity of possible responses to every character and event. Celebration and

⁴ William Hazlitt, from 'Characters of Shakespear's Plays, (London 1817)', in *The Romantics on Shakespeare*, ed. by Jonathan Bate, repr. edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1997), pp. 361-365 (p. 365).

⁵ Chris Fitter, 'A Tale of Two Branaghs: *Henry V*, Ideology, and the Mekong Court', in *Shakespeare Left and Right*, ed. by Ivo Kamps (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 259-275 (p. 261).

denigration, heroism and irony exist uneasily side by side'.⁶ She therefore highlights the different perspectives that can be considered when observing how the role of the king is explored on the stage or analysing the effects of these responses on the audience's perception of Henry. Nicholas Hytner notes that 'one of the most striking things about the Chorus is how often the action we are promised fails to materialise. It is as if we're given first the approved, spin-doctored version of history, and then the messy reality.'⁷ His production focused on some of the inconsistencies between Henry's public and private persona that the text and performance of it reveals.

Performance history and the contexts of recent production.

The performance history of *King Henry V* indicates that production has previously coincided with political and spiritual crises at home and abroad, encouraging closer scrutiny of the demands and effects of leadership that is based on fragile hierarchical structures. Whilst *King Henry V* looks back to a medieval past, performances in 1599 took place during instability in Elizabeth's government. In September of that year the Earl of Essex defied the Queen and returned to London from Ireland where he had been sent by Elizabeth to quell insurrection, thereby creating civil unrest. The opening scene, which is concerned with Henry's right to wage war abroad and considers instability at home, includes reference to these events, particularly in Act 1 when the traitors Cambridge, Scroop and Grey are held to account by the king who issues warrants for their deaths. In reality Cambridge was one of Essex's predecessors and a topical political interest could be implied by the inclusion of the

⁶ Anne Barton, 'The King Disguised: Shakespeare's *Henry V* and the Comical History', in *William Shakespeare, Histories and Poems*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986), pp. 253-276 (p. 262).

⁷ Nicholas Hytner, 'The Director's Cut (interviews by Jonathan Bate and Kevin Wright)', in *The RSC Shakespeare, William Shakespeare, Henry V*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (London: Macmillan, 2010), pp. 176-201 (p. 183).

character at this point as part of the dramatic structure of the play. In twenty-first century Britain, Blair's self-interest and lack of willingness to share power with Gordon Brown had led to divisions within New Labour. He sought affirmation as a leader by travelling abroad to support the US in the wake of 9/11, appearing at Congress with George Bush, whose own methods of achieving a second term of office had come under scrutiny. Their mutual faith in God appeared to be a binding factor in their relationship although their foreign policy was deemed by some to be at odds with religious sentiment.

The spiritual aspect of the monarch's character and its impact on the political demands of the role was an attractive subject since it created the opportunity for developing considerable dramatic tension at the point of delivery in the late 1590s. Michael Boyd notes that Shakespeare could 'stare English history in the face with a dangerous ambiguous gaze. His chief patron was the catholic Lord Ferdinando Strange and his voice was young, angry and violently schismatic [...]. Perhaps Shakespeare's Histories are a covert history of his own time, viewed through the mirrored prism of the past.'⁸ Boyd's suggested reading of Shakespeare that observes 'the history of England emerging (or falling from) a medieval age of Christian faith (Henry VI) and chivalry (Talbot) into an age of scepticism, compromise, individualism and doubt, redeemed only by a fragile humanism and the possibility of romantic love'⁹ may account for the reasons why Henry V's leadership is portrayed as it is in the play. Each of these features form part of Henry's character, shown in scenes at different points during the action. By the end of the play Henry has been revealed as a king prepared to commit murder himself but it has also shown the

⁸ Michael Boyd, 'Different Histories', in *The Histories*, ed. by Kevin Wright (Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company, 2007), pp. 3-4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

audience the impossibility of being a successful leader in the feudal and international conditions of the time.

The two productions considered in this chapter exemplify how the play has been used for political debate in the twenty-first century. Hytner's setting for the play, designed by Tim Hatley, could be interpreted as politically provocative since the ideas for staging were influenced by the premier-style leadership advocated by Blair. Henry's soldiers could have been from a platoon of any Western army in the theatre of war: 'It was to our advantage [...] that recent wars have not been fought by huge armies [...] Small detachments of men, often no larger than a company of actors, fight it out on street corners. Cameramen crouch in nearby foxholes. So Agincourt was evoked by small groups of actors crawling on their bellies in murky pools of light on the vast empty stage of the (aptly named) Olivier Theatre.'¹⁰ Boyd's production, designed by Tom Piper, used historical reference through costume, suggesting a return to chivalric values and traditions. At times the audience was invited into the *locus* of the play since the actors performed not just on the raised platform of the thrust stage but also in the mid-air spaces above it in addition to using the aisles throughout the auditorium. It was staged in the aftermath of the 7/7 terrorist attacks in London at the end of Blair's premiership, which was hastened by his failure as head of the government to provide reasonable proof for deposing Saddam Hussein on the grounds that he was developing weapons of mass destruction. Boyd observes: 'The Chorus on Henry's return post-Agincourt, to London, openly speculated with the audience on the reception "our generals" would receive on

¹⁰ Hytner, 'The Director's Cut', p. 186.

returning from war, without mentioning Iraq or Afghanistan by name.’¹¹ These productions therefore showed an engagement with the legitimacy of current conflicts that is a feature of *King Henry V*, as well as addressing the position of Shakespeare in British theatre during a decade of turbulent domestic and foreign policy.

Theatrical presentations of *King Henry V* in the recent past have been overshadowed to some extent by film versions portraying Henry as a patriotic hero. Whilst they evolved out of performative experience in the theatre by actors who went on to direct themselves in film¹², critical analysis suggests that they obscured character traits in the text that are less easy to disguise in the theatrical space. Laurence Olivier’s iconic version of *Henry V* in 1944 was tailored to the needs of an audience and country experiencing its darkest political hour. He cut the scene with the three traitors along with Henry’s uncompromisingly brutal speech outside the gates of Harfleur. He also romanticised Henry’s wooing of Katherine in the final act, borrowing the *mise-en-scène* from medieval illuminated manuscripts depicting courtly love. Olivier did, however, include Henry’s Eastcheap allies who feature significantly in the narrative of *King Henry V*, including Pistol, Bardolph, Nym and the Boy. Henry’s particularly cruel treatment of Bardolph and Falstaff is detailed throughout the text of *King Henry V*, providing telling incidental and anecdotal action which informs an audience about baser aspects of the king’s leadership. James N. Loehlin suggests that Act 2 Scene 1 in Olivier’s film ‘becomes about the Globe environment itself: the chief action is between the players and the groundlings

¹¹ Boyd, ‘The Director’s Cut’, p. 182.

¹² Laurence Olivier played Henry V in Tyrone Guthrie’s production for the Old Vic in 1937. Kenneth Branagh played the same role in Adrian Noble’s Royal Shakespeare Company production at Stratford in 1983.

rather than between the characters on stage'¹³ which gives an indication of how the Eastcheap actors might have been received by a theatrical audience. However, they remained largely on the margins of the main action and the circumstances of Bardolph's eventual execution were avoided. Olivier was faithful to the text at the start, creating a pause at Southampton to cut back to Mistress Quickly's intimate depiction of Falstaff's relatively respectable death, haunted by Henry's rejection of him. As Loehlin observes with reference to the epilogue of 2 *Henry IV*, to cut this reference in the text would potentially alienate an audience who were 'expecting to see the story [from 2 *Henry IV*] continued "with Sir John in it".'¹⁴ It would also eliminate any sense of patriarchy, however tainted, that provides a foil for a younger hero who still has everything to prove and achieve in terms of chivalry and leadership.

In 1989, Kenneth Branagh's post-Falkands film of *Henry V* attempted to deal with the emotional demands of leadership in war and coincided with Branagh's own rise to power as a film director. Thatcherite Britain had experienced the full impact of British foreign policy under its first woman prime minister, including the sinking of the *Belgrano* in May 1982; a negative milestone in her premiership. Branagh's film included Henry's handling of the traitorous nobles and was less compromising than Olivier in his treatment of Falstaff, adding an Eastcheap scene from 2 *Henry IV* in which Hal carouses with his friends. Hal's non-diegetic voiceover of his thoughts on Sir John implied his innate wisdom in breaking with the drunkard whose excess placed him in a disadvantaged position. This filmed flashback feature was used by Hytner in his 2003 production but developed for a different effect, along with other

¹³ James N. Loehlin, *Shakespeare in Performance: Henry V*, repr. edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 35.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

inserts recorded on video to suggest a mediated representation of events. However, as Chris Fitter argues, the Royal Shakespeare Company's stage and Renaissance Films versions were 'politically polar'¹⁵ and Branagh's directorial interpretation 'deliberately shredded vital documentation provided by the text and the RSC production and his Henry therefore emerge[d] as a familiar figure: the handsome military hero and religious patriot at the heart of an establishment cover-up.'¹⁶ Fitter implies that Branagh's film glossed over the questions raised by Noble's stage production although, as this chapter will show, it informed more recent theatrical performances by both the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre.

Directorial approaches by Nicholas Hytner and Michael Boyd.

As the history of royal marriage in the last decade of the twentieth century shows¹⁷, and the final summary of events in the future recalled by the Chorus in *King Henry V* admits, satisfactory union based on mutual love and respect that secures the long-term stability of the monarchy is a difficult aspiration to achieve. Theatrical and political events surrounding the productions mounted in May 2003 and throughout seasons in Stratford and London in 2007-8 revealed weaknesses in the political and monarchical infrastructure. The lack of the play's production in the repertoire of the Royal National Theatre's history,¹⁸ for example, might imply the underlying potency of the challenge to authority that its subtext produces. In 2003 it was six years since

¹⁵ Chris Fitter, 'A Tale of Two Branaghs: *Henry V*, Ideology, and the Mekong Agincourt', p. 260.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Princess Diana divorced the Prince of Wales on 28 August 1996 and died in a car crash in Paris on 31 August 1997.

¹⁸ Nicholas Hytner's production of *Henry V* in 2003 was the first on the stage of the Royal National Theatre.

Tony Blair had delivered his ‘new dawn’¹⁹ speech, on the steps of the Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank, appropriating a space linked with post-war optimism to do so. According to Alastair Campbell ‘the crowd cheered every word.’²⁰ By May 2003 the US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz ‘had said that WMD had been a bureaucratic convenience to get us into the war [with Iraq]’,²¹ revealing the illegitimacy of the invasion. At that time Nicholas Hytner suggested that ‘current events are perhaps illuminated by the play, but they also illuminate the play. I hope that’s what we’re doing [...] The rehearsal room was littered with material about the historical Henry V and about contemporary warfare. People were bringing it in all the time.’²² He also noted that ‘Shakespeare’s scepticism (which I think runs hand in hand with his visceral admiration of the king’s qualities of leadership and oratory) seemed clearer and clearer as the rehearsal period went on.’²³ Hytner’s main concern was to capture the mood of the actors and the audience: ‘In a sense my response to the war is neither here nor there. Our collective response to the play is more important.’²⁴ Adrian Lester, Hytner’s Henry, reiterated this in his approach: ‘[We] decided the best thing we could possibly do would be to have someone who has been over to Afghanistan and Baghdad, who could sit down and watch the production and say: “Yeah, I got that”.’²⁵ Hytner also suggested the role of the audience in shaping the viewing perspective: ‘Such was the widespread mistrust of our own war leader’s

¹⁹ Alastair Campbell, *The Blair Years, Extracts from The Alastair Campbell Diaries*, ed. by Alastair Campbell and Richard Scott (London: Hutchinson, 2007), p. 187.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 698.

²² Nicholas Hytner in ‘Nicholas Hytner on *Henry V*’, interview with Daniel Rosenberg, Olivier Theatre, 20 June 2003
<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/discover-more/platforms/platform-papers/nicholas-hytner-on-henry-v> > [accessed 14 January 2013] (para. 4 of 29).

²³ *Ibid.*, (para. 11).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, (para. 4).

²⁵ Adrian Lester, actor playing Henry V interviewed by Michael W. Wright, in ‘If the Crown Fits ...’, *Sunday Times, Culture*, 27 April 2003, p. 4.

rhetoric, and even of his motives, that Henry was tainted by his association with Tony Blair. The resemblance between the two is only superficial. [...] But the audience may have wanted too badly to discuss the kind of leader it thought Blair was, and I suppose the production encouraged them.’²⁶ Casting Lester in the leading role also emphasised the diversity of a multi-cultural population and the desire to encourage a different audience mix.

Developing a repertoire that reflected the nation to itself was identified as part of Hytner’s ethos as the artistic director of a publicly funded institution. It included extending accessibility of performance through choice of production²⁷ and reduction of ticket prices through the private subsidy of the ‘Travelex’ season²⁸ that gave access to performance for as little as £10. Michael Billington notes that Hytner ‘gave flesh and meaning to the Blairite policy of social inclusion’²⁹ and that *Henry V* in particular ‘addressed the meaning of nationhood’.³⁰ In his first Artistic Director’s Statement Hytner suggested that the state ‘should pay for Art because a healthy society thrives on self-examination and should be constantly engaged in a continuing investigation of what makes us tick, as a nation and as individuals.’³¹ Through his choice of play he indicated that examination of the monarchy and the government were both significant areas of public debate in a democracy. Hytner brought with

²⁶ Hytner, ‘The Director’s Cut’, p. 180.

²⁷ *Henry V* played in repertoire in the Olivier with a satirical American musical *Jerry Springer – The Opera*. *Power* by Nick Dear and *Democracy* by Michael Frayn played in the Cottesloe in July and September 2003. Nicholas Kent’s production *Justifying War: Scenes from the Hutton Inquiry* by Richard Norton-Taylor was to play at the Tricycle Theatre, Kilburn in October 2003. *Stuff Happens*, David Hare’s play on the lead up to the war in Iraq would be staged in the Olivier in September 2004.

²⁸ In his interview with Daniel Rosenberg Hytner noted that ‘30% of the audience for *Henry V* have not been to the National before.’

²⁹ Michael Billington, *State of the Nation* (London: Faber, 2007), p. 391.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Nicholas Hytner, ‘Artistic Director’s Statement’, *The Royal National Theatre Annual Report and Financial Statement 2003/04* <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/sites/all/libraries/files/documents/NT_Annual_Report_0304.pdf> [accessed 1 August 2012], p. 5.

him a particular kudos to the directorship of the Royal National Theatre in his first season.³² As a successful commercial director he was well aware of the lucrative tourist revenue to be gained from making British history accessible to an international audience. Susan Bennett suggests that the South Bank had undergone a change that drew a broader potential audience base. The Royal National Theatre, noted by Bennett as a provider of high art, is part of a 'pod of cultural infrastructure that has refused its surroundings. Yet now that refusal has been negated, appropriated, and claimed by the overarching tourist environment.'³³ Nicholas Hytner also acknowledges the purpose of a national theatre that 'looks at our nation in an international context.'³⁴ The need to appeal to a broader spectrum of international consumers including tourists who do not necessarily have an intimate knowledge of British politics, British history or Shakespeare therefore also shaped his production. The setting for *Henry V*, as noted, was modern dress with nondescript military uniforms and presidential style suits. European and American political leadership styles and media representations of them were developed in the design concepts of the two courts and appropriated by Lester and the other actors in their acting styles. Previous casting of Lester as a presidential aid in Mike Nichols's film version of *Primary Colors*, for example, helped to blur the distinction between British/American setting.

³² Hytner's commercial successes included the West End hit *Miss Saigon*, a musical about the Vietnam War which used impressive technical staging devices, including a simulated landing of a helicopter onstage.

³³ Bennett, 'Universal experience: the city as tourist stage', pp.76- 90 (p. 85).

³⁴ Nicholas Hytner, interviewed in 'Reflecting the Nation' <<http://www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=6012&Document%252F@id=2545.html>> [accessed 1 August 2012] (Video).

Four years later, Michael Boyd's direction of the play for the Royal Shakespeare Company's season of the *Histories Cycle* was no less sympathetic to contextual events surrounding his staging of the cycle of history plays although his engagement with the text showed a different understanding of Henry's character and actions. Because *Henry V* ran in repertoire with *1* and *2 Henry IV* and five more plays in the cycle Boyd was able, and perhaps needed to, expand the scope of the production to include reference to the domestic problems faced by Henry. He outlined the relevance of *Henry V* for a modern audience by suggesting that in 2007 'the question of Englishness is on the agenda again [...]. The question of religion and conflict generally. Power and the abuse of power feels very current now at a time when we're involved in a war ourselves obviously and we're also aware of a threat of civil unrest in the form of terrorist activity at home, both here and in America or in Europe,'³⁵ adding that 'the idea of civil conflict to the point of violence which is one of the central streams that runs all the way through the History plays is something that we can respond to very immediately now.'³⁶ Unlike Hytner, Boyd also raised the question of Catholicism and religious dissent which, as the context of the original production in the 1590s suggests, was an issue of topical debate.

Boyd's design capitalised on his previous work staging the history plays in groups; a feature of the Royal Shakespeare Company's repertoire since the mainstream successes of Terry Hands and Adrian Noble in the seventies and eighties respectively. Michael Billington notes Boyd's 'ability to direct vertically and think

³⁵ Michael Boyd, interviewed by Paul Allen in 'Director Talk', 7 November 2007 <http://www.rsc.org.uk/downloads/rsc_he5_2007_michael_boyd_iv.pdf> [accessed 12 February 2012], (p. 1).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

laterally'³⁷ in his 2000 version of *Henry VI* in which 'actors [...] were frequently required to descend from the heavens like SAS men (and women) on a combat mission'.³⁸ Boyd also fostered an ensemble approach favoured by Brecht and the Russian theatres that influenced Boyd most. This collective way of working devolves power away from hierarchical structures and gives significant weight to each player. The same staging techniques were revived for *Henry V* in which the French were lowered in and out of the action of the English on the stage on trapezes, demonstrating the grace and agility apparently lacking in Henry's force. Whilst the French broke the horizontal stage picture from the vertical air space the English army erupted from under the stage with bombs and ladders to begin their assault on France. Boyd's production was also marked by the use of a bare stage in a different way from Hytner's 'found space aesthetic'³⁹ in which the Olivier theatre would be 'stripped back to its bare architectural form.'⁴⁰ In Stratford the relatively empty raised stage area was coupled with metonymic effects built into the basic design, the use of props such as Henry's crown and the colour-coding of medieval-style costumes: black and grey for the English, navy and gold for the glamorous, wealthy French. The actors were re-cast across the production cycle which reflected on Henry's status as leader. Jonathan Slinger was a pertinent example; he had played Henry's personal hero in *Richard II* and reappeared as the capable, articulate Fluellen in *Henry V* whose pragmatism at Harfleur saved the English from defeat as much as Henry's rhetoric.

³⁷ Billington, *State of the Nation*, p. 371.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Peter Reynolds and Lee White, *Henry V Rehearsal Diaries*, Entry Eleven: Space and Spectacle <[http://www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=6017&Document\[@id=3115\]%252FChapter%252F@id=10.html](http://www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=6017&Document[@id=3115]%252FChapter%252F@id=10.html)> [accessed 1 August 2012], (para.1 of 2).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

The setting manifested in a practical way Boyd's comments that Shakespeare's early experience of other drama of the period such as the Corpus Christi mystery plays could have affected his view of history: 'This was not our linear, progressive, rationalist history, but a concentric, cyclical view of history that revolves around the central event of Christ's Passion on the cross.'⁴¹ Religion, therefore, was as much a concern as the political aspects of military campaigns of this cycle of the histories. The staging was integral to performance and affected viewing of action and character. Tom Piper, the designer, suggests that the Courtyard Theatre at Stratford is 'a shared space in which both audience and actors are in continual dialogue'⁴² unlike the Olivier which is more like an amphitheatre with the actors generally separated from the audience although the spectators can clearly observe each other during performance. The structure of the Courtyard Theatre is therefore a more inclusive space for an audience to engage with in performance. In Piper's experience 'having a thrust stage means that the audience has multiple viewpoints wrapped around the action on stage [...] This is a much more democratic space, where the audience is intimately involved in the action.'⁴³ Entrances and exits were made down walkways and steps leading off from the main acting area bringing Henry very close to the spectator on many different levels, just as in the text he moves amongst the different representatives of his people. More importantly the use of the vertical spaces above the stage, particularly in the battle scenes, meant that the audience had to consider the upper auditorium spaces including those occupied by spectators in the upper galleries. In doing so they were made aware of disruptions to the normal line of focus and a sense of involvement in the action could be developed.

⁴¹ Boyd, 'Different Histories', p. 4.

⁴² Tom Piper, 'Designing the Histories', in *The Histories*, p. 42.

⁴³ Tom Piper, 'The Courtyard Theatre', in *The Histories*, p. 26.

On the horizontal plane of the stage, Piper developed the thrust staging to include a circular tower upstage⁴⁴ resembling ‘a helmet with a visor slot’⁴⁵ that opened up for entrances and exits and provided a spiral staircase for access. It was then possible to imagine the stage ‘as the body of England, the walkways onto it its arms and legs, the traps its guts.’⁴⁶ The impression of fluidity between the characters and the space was therefore created from the start – a significant feature of the set design since the thrust stage often remained undefined by furniture or properties. It was also important for experiencing the constant interchange between the scenes in the French and English camps as the battles commenced.

Staging Act 2 Scene 1. Eastcheap, the Eastcheapers and their functions in the play.

Until the latter part of the twentieth century emphasis on the comedic element of the Eastcheap scenes in *King Henry V* excluded them from convincingly illuminating the difficulties Henry faces when he is on the brink of war with France. E. M.W.

Tillyard, for example, considers that these scenes were one of the signs of the play’s ‘weak construction [...]’. Whereas in *Henry IV* these were linked in all sorts of ways with the serious action, in *Henry V* they are mainly detached scenes introduced for mere variety.⁴⁷ This critical reading does not take account of their inclusion early in the play so that the narratives of Bardolph, Nym, Pistol and the Boy can be considered alongside Henry’s activities when the dramatic action moves to France.

The Quarto title-page of 1600 promotes *King Henry V* as ‘The Cronicle History of Henry the fift, With his battell fought at *Agin Court* in *France*. Together with

⁴⁴ <<http://www.rsc.org.uk/explore/shakespeare/plays/henry-v/2007-photo-gallery-design.aspx> > [accessed 15 September 2013] (Photographic evidence).

⁴⁵ Piper, ‘Designing the Histories’, p. 43.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare’s History Plays* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 312.

*Auntient Pistol*⁴⁸ and indicates Pistol's prominent theatrical status as a crowd-puller. In the eighteenth century Samuel Johnson emphasised the intrinsic value of Pistol's character when he commented on his final exit: '[A]ll the comick personages are now dismissed [...] I believe every reader regrets their departure.'⁴⁹ For readers in the twenty-first century the reason for this regret lies not in any sense of charm these characters offer to an audience through their comic interaction, for most of the comedy in the play evolves out of the ironies of warfare. Nor does it lie in traditional presentation of the Eastcheap group in clichéd Elizabethan alehouse settings that situate them at an historical and emotional distance from the audience. It is more relevant that the experiences of these characters offer a poignant sense of real lives blighted by abject poverty, fear and the need to adapt in order to survive. Deprivation drives them not only towards war but also, in the case of Nym and Bardolph, certain death. Their narratives are crucially linked with Henry and his actions which in turn helps the audience to make sense of his character. In performance they serve a particular purpose since, as Adrian Lester⁵⁰ notes, 'no character can play the status [of the king] themselves. It has to be handed to you by the other actors.'⁵¹ This empowers all of the characters in the play; without them Henry cannot be fully defined.

Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield contend that in *King Henry V* the dramatist's attitude towards the function of the Eastcheap characters appears to have

⁴⁸ Quarto title page, reproduced in *King Henry V*, ed. by Andrew Gurr, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, updated edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 226.

⁴⁹ Samuel Johnson, from *Works of Shakespeare*, ed. by Samuel Johnson, 1765, in *Shakespeare: Henry V, A Selection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Michael Quinn (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 32-34 (p. 33).

⁵⁰ Adrian Lester, interviewed in 'Strengths and Weaknesses', <<http://www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=6032&Document%252F@id=3366.html>> [downloaded 1 August 2012] (Video).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

changed from the ways in which they have been used in *2 Henry IV*. They suggest that ‘sympathy for their characters has been withdrawn; from this point on there seems to be nothing positive about them’⁵² although this does not prevent an intense interest in what happens to them during the action. The fate of the Boy is one such example. He first appears in Eastcheap in Act 2 Scene 1 and is used to provide penetrating commentaries on the shortcomings of his masters, especially Pistol, before sacrificing his life doing his duty. In addition, the interaction between the Eastcheap characters and the King reveals the baser aspects of Henry’s character that cannot be demonstrated elsewhere without serious political consequence. The ways in which this interaction is sustained over the course of the play indicates its structural significance.

Henry’s formative relationships in Eastcheap are linked favourably with building his royal character. The Bishop of Ely tells Canterbury that ‘wholesome berries thrive and ripen best/Neighbour’d by fruit of baser quality’ (1.1.61-2). He is also confident that whilst Henry’s spiritual thoughts were concealed ‘[u]nder the veil of wildness’(1.1.65) they continued to be developed in the company of Falstaff and his tavern companions including Bardolph and Pistol. Andrew Gurr implies a lack of credibility in Henry’s total transformation from prince to king when he cites a medieval account of his reign by Thomas Walsingham who describes how ‘as soon as he was invested with the emblems of royalty, he suddenly became a different man. His care was now for self-restraint and goodness and gravity, and there was no kind

⁵² Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, ‘History and Ideology, Masculinity and Miscegenation: The Instance of *Henry V*’, in *Shakespeare’s History Plays*, ed. by R. J. C. Watt (London: Pearson Education, 2002), pp. 204-227 (p. 213).

of virtue which he put on one side and did not desire to practise himself.’⁵³ In the opening scenes of the play the prince has already been crowned king but whilst in some respects Shakespeare shows Henry’s goodness he also shows his lack of restraint, especially in political situations such as his threat to the Dauphin and at Harfleur. He also shows the audience the effects of circumstantial change in status elsewhere in London. Bardolph and Nym are preparing to leave their homes, assuming professional if lowly roles once again in the king’s army. Pistol is newly married in Eastcheap, causing a rift between himself and Nym. At court Henry’s contemplation of his future surely includes the need to consolidate alliance through marriage that will inevitably involve him in war with France. He must also become an effective soldier. Both at court and in the suburbs there is an undertone of potential violence. The dramatic structure of the subplot therefore reflects hierarchical and social transformations in the main plot that involve conflict and the need to build peace and union through marriage.

Nicholas Hytner’s staging of Act Two Scene One at the Olivier Theatre.

Nicholas Hytner’s handling of the initial Eastcheap scene, as the text of the play suggests, did little to reassure the audience about Henry or his army, although David Kennedy, the actor playing Bardolph, indicates in an interview in role that there was an underlying sense of duty in the move to France: ‘If the king says we go, we got to go.’⁵⁴ The scene built an atmosphere of apathy and violence. It was prefaced by the presentation of Henry filmed in a head and shoulders mid-shot speaking directly to

⁵³ Thomas Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham 1376-1422*, trans. by David Preest; with annotations and an introduction by James G. Clark (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2005), p. 389.

⁵⁴ David Kennedy, actor playing Bardolph, interviewed as Bardolph in ‘Bardolph’ <<http://www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=6012&Document%252F@id=2620.html>> [accessed 14 August 2012] (Video).

camera in a television broadcast, giving his upbeat lines from the ending of the previous scene as if reading from an auto-cue. In this mediated representation he appeared too inexperienced to be speaking his words with total conviction. During the scene change to Act 2 Scene 1 Nym watched television, using a remote control device to channel-hop ‘between Henry making [the] broadcast to the nation, snooker, the Archbishop justifying the invasion and football.’⁵⁵ The Chorus addressed the audience directly from the pub set, linking main action and subplot. Nym and Bardolph were characterised by regional and local accents. Nym was identifiable as Mancunian whilst Bardolph developed delivery of his lines to create the background of an East End blackmarketeer. Neither man was dressed in uniform, emphasising similarity rather than difference in rank – a departure from the stage directions of the Folio which clearly indicate their status as ‘*Corporal*’ and ‘*Lieutenant*’ (2.1). Bardolph, in particular, did not have the overtly comic carbuncular nose that the text offers him but the dangerous lifestyles of the characters were suggested by a readiness to respond quickly and tersely to provocation that dispelled any expectation of laughter. Pistol and Mistress Quickly emerged from the margins of the auditorium by entering up the downstage steps. In this way the actors created a link with the spectators but this also added a dimension of reality to their characters. Their suggested hangovers after a night of heavy drinking and recent nuptials reinforced the lacklustre atmosphere and reluctance to depart for the army at Southampton as Mistress Quickly cleared tables. Whereas in productions using traditional costume the men are allowed to wear swords as a symbol of status and rank, in this modern

⁵⁵ Peter Reynolds, *Henry V, Royal National Theatre Education Workpack* <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/sites/all/libraries/files/documents/henry_v.pdf> [accessed 1 August 2012] (p. 4).

dress version the men carried knives which suggested a different environment of localised petty crime and violent retribution. The overall tone of the scene was one of apathy that spilled easily into ferocious reaction. The comic potential was dampened by the cutting of Nym's and Pistol's wordplay inciting each to draw their weapons. Hytner's aim, according to Peter Reynolds and Lee White, was to explore 'how men deal (or fail to deal) with their own emotions, fears and anxieties [...They] are all products of military training, but their projected machismo is at odds with the close and intimate bonding that underpins their relationships.'⁵⁶ The audience response to this was muted as a result of the delivery of the scene and its own situation of viewing the action from a darkened auditorium, although the shallow curve of the Olivier space does allow for the audience to be aware of itself. It provided the insecurity needed for the tension of the following action, showing Henry amidst the practical chaos of departure handing out letters of execution to the traitors.

The preparations of the Lieutenant, Corporal and Ancient to depart for France at the beginning of Act 2 develop the expectation that they will take part in Henry's campaign and be linked with him in a military capacity. Emma Smith notes that '[t]he Folio is careful to identify the men by rank [...] and the specificity of the stage directions is echoed by the men's greetings'.⁵⁷ They are introduced in the text as 'Corporal Nym', 'Lieutenant Bardolph' and 'Ancient Pistol' (2.1.1-3) thereby establishing the lower ranks. Along with Mistress Quickly and the Boy, these characters are a microcosm of the wider social and political hierarchies and they are

⁵⁶ Peter Reynolds and Lee White, Rehearsal Diary for *Henry V*, Entry Ten: 'Touch Her Soft Mouth, and March' <<http://www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=6024&Document%252F@id=3115.html>> [accessed 1 August 2012] (para. 22 of 69).

⁵⁷ Emma Smith, *Shakespeare In Production: King Henry V*, ed. by Emma Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 109.

developed alongside the aristocrats in the play. Pistol's marriage, for example, is a wise financial precaution just as Henry's is meant to fill the English coffers. Pistol needs someone to look out for his interests at home as he suggests in the subsequent Eastcheap scene. He tells his new wife: 'Look to my chattels and my moveables. Let senses rule: the word is, pitch and pay' (2.3.38-40). The individual personalities of the soldiers are also highlighted in these scenes, presenting a microcosm of Henry's character. Nym is marked by his indecisiveness, Pistol is a verbose bully and Bardolph is a peacemaker. Each of these traits is illustrated in the character of the king at different points in the action. Henry seeks valid reason to go to war from others rather than making up his own mind and is finally goaded into action when the ambassador presents the Dauphin's tennis balls as a challenge. At Harfleur he bullies the French into submission with threats of repercussions that far outweigh the force of the opposition. In the final act he tries to cement an uneasy peace in his wooing of Katherine who still considers him to be an enemy.

The structure of the play invites closer scrutiny to establish the significance of Eastcheap in relation to Henry's public persona. In the Folio text Andrew Gurr considers that the placement of the initial scene between Bardolph, Nym and Pistol is one of the play's structural inconsistencies: 'The Chorus to Act 2 announces the audience's arrival in Southampton, but first we go to Eastcheap in London.'⁵⁸ Rather than imagining the army geared up for departure as the Chorus urges, the audience is immediately privy to a private conversation between a particular section of the fighting force which exists at the margins and yet whose narratives are repeatedly referred to throughout the action when it moves to France. This deliberately disrupts

⁵⁸ Andrew Gurr, 'Note on the Text', in *King Henry V*, New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. by Andrew Gurr, updated edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 64-71 (p. 65).

the pace and shows the audience the intimacy of mundane events such as leave-taking that exist alongside the bigger, epic political momentum of mobilisation towards the coast. The dramatic purpose of introducing Eastcheap at the start is reinforced in Act 2 Scene 3 when Nym urges departure to catch up with the army. His simple colloquial idiolect exposes his reluctance to leave: 'Shall we shog? The king will be gone from Southampton'(2.3.37). The structural device of delaying action is used again later in Act 4 Scene 4 following Henry's St Crispin's Day speech in which Pistol encounters a French soldier and has to revert to slow translation of each utterance. Here the audience sympathy is with the victim who is seen as comparatively civilised when his pleas for mercy are relayed to the savage Pistol who spares his life, albeit briefly, for money. Scenes such as these undercut the rousing rhetorical tone of the preceding calls to action by the Chorus and Henry. They lend themselves to development when an ensemble approach is used, such as that employed by Michael Boyd at the Courtyard Theatre for the *Histories Cycle* season.

Michael Boyd's interpretation of the Eastcheap characters in Act 2 Scene 1.

In Act 2 Scene 1 in Michael Boyd's production, Bardolph, Nym and Pistol were easily identifiable by their costume and demeanour. On a darkened stage with lighting spilling over into the auditorium, costumes and gesture were important for evoking the history of each character. Bardolph was characteristically rotund suggesting a life of excess, perhaps making a visual reference to the absent Falstaff but also implying his lack of fitness to fight. His notable facial features could be scrutinized by the audience at close range and his slicked back hairstyle identified him as an ageing Teddy Boy, less aggressive but more sly than Hytner's Bardolph.

His doublet was slashed to reveal a red and orange undershirt, giving him the appearance of a commedia character. Nym was lanky and tall, his weak body emphasised by his close-clinging undergarments. A rope belt at his waist was a signifier of his ultimate end, hanged for theft. Both characters carried weapons; Bardolph a rapier, Nym a short sword. Their entry as drunkards was deliberately ironic since it coincided with the Chorus's line 'We'll not offend one stomach with our play' (2.0.40). Pistol, however, dominated the group since he was tall, dark and dishevelled with an aggressive attitude; an impressive physical presence for a character who played so near the audience. He was accompanied by his new wife Mistress Quickly, who spoke with a rough Glaswegian accent that hinted at a harsh urban background. The impact of Pistol and Quickly as a couple on the audience brought to mind other infamous criminal pairings of the East End such as Bill Sykes and Nancy in Dickens's *Oliver Twist*. Playing the scene with the lights up in the auditorium not only unified the audience with the actors but also helped to establish the actors more firmly in the whole auditorium space; they often entered and exited through the audience. The links between Henry and the Eastcheap characters were also consolidated through blocking moves on the stage, since Henry entered silently to observe Pistol's declaration that Falstaff's 'heart is fractured and corroborate' (2.1.124) and also Nym's appraisal of Henry's weaknesses as king. Pistol carried an arrow for his exit; a symbolic prop reminding the audience of the archers at Agincourt. Henry was to use a similar arrow much later in the action as he reflected on the battle. Pistol's story was highlighted throughout the performance which contrasted with the way in which it was treated by Hytner.

The presentation of the Eastcheap characters in early-morning London emphasises the theme of dissent since it is significantly placed between the Chorus's reference to traitorous action by 'three corrupted men' (2.0.22), Cambridge, Scroop and Grey, who are higher in the political infrastructure, and their public humiliation and despatch in Act 2 Scene 2. Their treatment highlights Henry's resolve to strengthen his position at home but the intensity of his reproach of them indicates insecurity about power. Whilst this scene has sometimes been cut from production its inclusion helps the audience make a clearer connection with the dramatic purpose of the Eastcheap characters. With poor role models in the noble ranks, the Eastcheapers have little to live up to. Whilst the aristocratic traitors die, Bardolph deflects conflict between Pistol and Nym. However, echoes of the nobles' fate can be detected in later events surrounding the characters of Bardolph and Nym, who are eventually 'both hanged' (4.4.57) for stealing whilst in the service of the monarch. In addition, Pistol's profiteering escapades in the war show his disloyalty to the king's public ideals. The appearance of low-ranking soldiers in Act 2 Scene 1 is also significant in terms of later events far into the action since the narratives of both Bardolph and Pistol bring them into direct contact with Henry but for different reasons and for different purposes. Bardolph's death, for example, has an immediate and direct impact since it dramatises the ruthless streak in Henry's character.

Allowing the audience to lag behind the main action has a dramatic purpose in performance. The content of Act 2 Scene 1 allows time to pause and consider the poor moral quality of the individuals who make up the lower ranks of Henry's army. Their narratives show that however hard Henry tries to subdue dissent by punishing traitors, the spiritual failings of moral weakness and greed elsewhere will find

another outlet that Henry is less able to control. The Eastcheap soldiers are, according to Terry Hands, ‘the first “separatist group” of the play. Landless, lawless, parasites on the body-politic’⁵⁹, their aim is not success but plunder. By setting up the war Henry is also creating the conditions for baser behaviours that he himself may find difficult to resist. It is ironic that theft is the one crime that he is happy to sanction on his own account in the political structure of the play, since one of the reasons he goes to war in the first place is economic gain. Later in the action he will try to avoid the disgrace of association with theft of property, and even a whole country, by publicly sacrificing friendship for principle when he hangs Bardolph for the crime of petty pilfering, declaring: ‘We would have all such offenders so cut off’ (3.7.91). The audience can reflect that Bardolph’s death highlights Henry’s hypocrisy. Bardolph’s theft of ‘a pax’ (3.7.44) is also symbolic of the wider theft instigated by Henry on the advice of the church, and perhaps of the plunder of the later Reformation. Pity is evoked for Bardolph, however, since in the initial Eastcheap scene he was instrumental in mediating between his friends and leading them away from a potentially lethal swordfight; a characteristic feature of his personality that compares favourably now with Henry’s lack of willingness to forgive and his recourse to violence.

By taking knaves and thieves to the battlefield Shakespeare gives even the humblest of the Eastcheap characters responsibility for illuminating parts of Henry’s character that he would like those around him to believe he has left behind since becoming king. These characters demonstrate loyalty amongst themselves and, in the case of Pistol, tenacity in battle. Chris Fitter goes further in establishing their real

⁵⁹ Terry Hands, ‘An Introduction to the Play’, in *The Royal Shakespeare Company’s Centenary Production of Henry V*, ed. by Sally Beaman (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1976), pp. 14-30 (p. 22).

purpose when he observes that the ‘rotation of attention between the decision-making aristocratic class-fraction and the common people whose lives are convulsed by them [...] makes clear the human cost of imperial ambition’⁶⁰ thereby highlighting the broader structural reasons for their inclusion which also link them with the effects of Henry’s aspirations. Their participation in his war also suggests that he is in part dependent on their services in order to secure victory even though their first responses to conflict may not be allegiance to the crown but personal financial gain. A questioning audience will infer that their motives are not necessarily any different from those of the sovereign, although it is clear that Henry has little choice but to act on his instinctive fear of political chaos.

Two further aspects of the Eastcheap scene are relevant to the presentation of Henry’s kingship; both are concerned with characterisation and what this reveals about the king. The first is the character of Pistol who is an opportunist like Henry himself and whose path he eventually crosses. Ewan Fernie has observed that ‘action is always figuratively presented in *Henry V*, and many of the play’s characters and scenes reflect and emphasise a specific dimension of Henry’s action’.⁶¹ He identifies Pistol as ‘Henry’s real doppelgänger. His name, as Henry recognises, suggests that “fierceness” which is that most terrible attribute of his heroic commander’⁶² and he explores the use of his character to parody the main action surrounding Henry. The evidence in the text, as discussed, supports this view. In opposition to Henry, Pistol is the only other character in the play to be linked with matrimony for personal gain and thus a connection between the two men is established. Pistol, despite his comic

⁶⁰ Fitter, ‘A Tale of Two Branaghs’, p. 261.

⁶¹ Ewan Fernie, ‘Action! *Henry V*’, in *Presentist Shakespeares*, ed. Grady and Hawkes, pp. 96-120 (p. 111).

⁶² *Ibid.*

verbosity, is always dislikeable and described by Samuel Johnson as ‘the model of all the bullies that have yet appeared on the English stage.’⁶³ Used in its original sense, the noun bully has a link with soldierly swaggering; a feature not only exhibited by Pistol but also the king himself when he threatens the citizens of Harfleur. It is Pistol who comments on this trait in the king after Harfleur when he declares support for Henry: ‘I love the lovely bully’ (4.1.46). Henry’s tactics clearly win Pistol’s respect although the audience are more sceptical.

The second concerns the repercussions of Henry’s treatment of Falstaff, whose mortal illness offstage is reported by Mistress Quickly and the Boy in Act 2 Scenes 1 and 3. Falstaff’s imminent death is a reminder of Henry’s betrayal of friendship that is directly linked with his accession to the throne at the end of 2 *Henry IV*. In the first Eastcheap scene of *King Henry V* Hal is no longer called by his colloquial nickname and this change is marked respectfully by Mistress Quickly and Nym through reference to his royal status in his absence. It also signals a turning point in their relationship with him since both of them link the responsibility for Falstaff’s demise with the Henry’s rise to power. Mistress Quickly observes in a spontaneous line of alliterative sincerity that ‘the king has killed his heart’ (2.1.69). Nym goes further in incriminating Henry with his typically simple summation of cause and effect: ‘The king hath run bad humours on the knight; that’s the even of it’ (2.1.96-7). Later he adds, more ruminatively, with the authority of someone who has some previous knowledge of Henry’s personality: ‘The king is a good king, but it must be as it may. He passes some humours and careers’ (2.3.101-2), thereby indicating Henry’s rashness. These sentiments are subjectively expressed in grief but

⁶³ Samuel Johnson, *Works of Shakespeare*, p. 34.

their value is enhanced by the relatively intimate situation in which they are encountered by an audience. If uttered in public they would be considered treason which is, as the audience is about to witness, punishable by death. For an audience adept at sifting information about character these comments can be recalled for effect as late as Act 4 when Llewellyn remembers how Henry ‘turned away the fat knight with the great belly doublet [...]. I forget his name’ (4.7.38-40). Henry’s cold rejection has become common knowledge amongst his soldiers. Whilst Llewellyn sees it as a wise act befitting a king the audience simultaneously recalls the reaction of the Eastcheap characters to his treatment of Sir John encountered at the start of the play. Even kings cannot escape the silent reflection of their subjects.

If knowledge and understanding of Henry’s character is a feature of the initial Eastcheap scene that is developed for dramatic effect later in the play, it also links with the theme of appearance and reality that surrounds the presentation of the king. Whereas the Chorus is responsible for shaping audience response the Boy is introduced in Act 2 Scene 1 as a commentator on the activities of the subplot characters and he becomes a touchstone for expressing truths that his masters hide easily from others, encouraging the audience to reflect in a similar way by addressing them directly when the opportunity arises – a powerful dramatic act. He is dismissed by Bardolph as a ‘rogue’ (2.1.68) for showing disrespect and ignoring Pistol’s rank, but the Boy’s brief appearances in the scene highlight a sense of responsibility that contrasts with the soldiers’ lack of care for Falstaff as they continue to quarrel over Pistol’s marriage rather than breaking to attend to him. The Boy’s fate also epitomises the treachery of the French. In Boyd’s production for example, the Boy was used onstage as one of the boys who are killed as the French loot the English

baggage. It is a poignant episode that is ‘expressly against the law of arms’ (4.7.1-2) according to Llewellyn and which allows the audience a glimpse of Henry’s unbridled compassion for the truly innocent, thereby conferring status on the Boy. Boyd’s Henry produced a visually impressive *tableau vivant* in the action of *Henry V* when he held the corpse of the Boy on his return to the English camp, signifying the Boy’s value as a linking character between Henry and the Eastcheapers but also between Henry and his army. The incident showed the king in a melancholy mood that broke with the rhetoric of war. The effect was noticeable due to the prominence of the Boy’s part having been developed in ensemble conditions.

Harfleur.

Henry’s cold-blooded nature is amply illustrated in his Harfleur speech after the siege of the town. His threats of terror should be considered in the context of the broader structure of the play and other moments, both public and private, when he reacts to his situation. Adrian Lester observes that in an Elizabethan context his traits as a king who rules by divine right could be seen as a weakness in the diplomatic environment of a present government in the twenty-first century. He has ‘a very big ego, a very quick temper and [is] very indignant.’⁶⁴ The Harfleur speech in the conditions of war shows this side of Henry’s character. At the beginning of Act 3 Henry tells his men: ‘In peace there’s nothing so becomes a man/As modest stillness and humility’ (3.1.3-4). When he woos Katherine he will try, unsuccessfully, to exhibit this kind of chivalric behaviour himself in order to appear charismatic.

However, at Harfleur when he is on the point of taking the town, the imagery of his

⁶⁴ Adrian Lester, ‘Strengths and Weaknesses’
 <<http://www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=6032&Document%252F@id=3366.html>> [accessed 1 August 2012] (Video).

speech demonstrates neither quality. The rhythmic pause after his invitation to surrender at the opening of the scene: 'What yet resolves the governor of the town?' (3.4.1) highlights his impatience as he scarcely waits for a response before beginning his 'latest parle' (3.4.2). His description of the English soldiers now bears little resemblance to the men he encouraged before the siege when he urged them 'Dishonour not your mothers' (3.2.21) and appealed to their nobility: 'For there is none of you so mean and base/That hath not noble lustre in your eyes' (3.2.28-9). He proudly aligns himself with them when he threatens:

For as I am a soldier,
A name that in my thoughts becomes me best,
If I begin the battery once again
I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur
Till in her ashes she lie buried. (3.4.6-10)

And yet his soldiers are transformed as his speech continues, becoming 'rough and hard of heart' (3.4.11), capable of 'mowing like grass' (3.4.13) the 'fresh fair virgins and [...] flowering infants' (3.4.13-14) of Harfleur. There will be no restraint, he tells the people, if self-discipline is replaced by the army's 'fierce career' (3.4.23) towards 'the filthy and contagious clouds/ Of heady murder, spoil and villainy' (3.4.31-2). The siege, depicted in tactical detail by the soldiers in the previous scene, however, suggests that Henry has already won Harfleur after an extended assault on the city so his speech is in some ways redundant. As E. A. Rauchut has noted, 'Henry V's threats of reprisal against the town are [...] in line with the laws governing the conduct of war; they are recriminations a general might be expected to take against a town found guilty of an obstinate or immoderate defense.'⁶⁵ However, Henry's final challenge to the Governor to yield or be destroyed through being 'guilty in defense'

⁶⁵ E. A. Rauchut, "'Guilty in Defense': A Note on *Henry V*, 3.3.123", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42.1 Spring, 1991 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 55-57 (p. 57).

(3.4.43) means little since the real likelihood of resistance is all but extinguished.

The reader therefore questions the motives of this vindictive speech at this moment in the play.

At the Olivier Theatre, the scene followed the severing of links between Henry and the Eastcheap characters, culminating in Bardolph's execution that ended the first half. He was shot by Henry himself at point blank range and elicited a shocked response from the audience.⁶⁶ By this time Lester's Henry, dressed in army fatigues and brandishing a pistol, was becoming adept at dispensing his own form of justice. His speech at Harfleur borrowed from staging conventions that suggest he speaks up to the governor on the battlements of the town. Facing the audience and delivering his speech over and above them in the Olivier, they became the citizens of Harfleur. This meant that they were now the recipients of Henry's angry threats, amplified live through a hand-held microphone. This setting reversed possible staging practices in which Henry addressed the gallery over the stage where the gentlemen would be seated, turning the audience at the Globe into the English army outside the walls. However, in some ways this reversal could develop ambiguity in the staging conventions in that if Henry could be identified as symbolising Essex at this point in the play on the Elizabethan stage, he would address the gentlemen in the gallery which could be seen as treason. In the same way Hytner allowed his Henry to address the civilian population who were the Olivier audience. They could therefore feel what it would be like to be threatened. His set design focused on the mediated representation of reality that is the hallmark of modern politics and public perception of war. Henry was surrounded by the trappings of the media. Anonymous characters

⁶⁶ Recorded performance of *Henry V*, recorded on 17 May 2003 (Royal National Theatre Archive, London) (VHS).

posing as cameramen set up their equipment and filmed only half of his speech to the governor before taking the rushes for broadcast at Henry's order, implying that he wished to hide parts of his tactics from the public gaze. Later it replayed as an edited news item⁶⁷ watched by the Princess, translated into French with subtitles to simulate the textual differences in language that are usually associated with the comedy of Act 3 Scene 5. In this production the edited speech gave a sense of the dark terror implied by Henry at the gates of Harfleur, creating a chilling dimension to Katherine's language lesson from Alice and also shaping responses to her subsequent betrothal.

Dollimore and Sinfield suggest that 'the exuberance of *Henry V* leads most commentators to link it with the early stages of the Irish expedition, when a successful return could be anticipated'⁶⁸, citing Henry's triumphant return as an example of the 'parallels between Henry and Essex.'⁶⁹ However, if Shakespeare's portrayal of Henry refers simultaneously to the difficulties of Elizabeth's position as Queen and the threat of Essex's gathering strength in equal measure, his Harfleur speech needs to be considered in this context. As a king, Henry would have reflected on the possibility of what could befall his subjects if he failed in his war against the French. The intensity of the vision of the brutality that could be visited on Harfleur if it resisted the new order focuses on the vulnerable civilian population. Henry's apparent lack of concern when he suggests that the citizens will be the victims of their own governor if they do not submit to him is a telling moment of bravado that also offers a note of caution to the audience of the Elizabethan playhouse:

⁶⁷ Henry's filmed speech can be viewed through this link:
 <<http://www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=6012&Document%252F@id=2649.html>> [accessed 1 August 2012] (Video).

⁶⁸ Dollimore and Sinfield, 'History and Ideology, Masculinity and Miscegenation: The Instance of *Henry V*', p. 310.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

What is't to me, when you yourselves are cause,
 If your pure maidens fall into the hand
 Of hot and forcing violation? (3.4.19-21)

His grisly list of potential atrocities which will involve 'shrill-shrieking daughters' (3.4.35) who will be raped, 'fathers taken by the silver beards/And their most reverend heads dashed to the walls'(3.4.36), and 'naked infants spitted upon pikes'(3.4.37) can be effectively compared and contrasted with the Chorus's description of the civilians left in England, which is currently 'guarded with grandsires, babies and old women,/Either past or not arrived to pith or puissance' (3.0.20-21). Pistol and his company have fostered the idea that those they have left behind are considered cherished when they take their leave. When Henry prepares for Agincourt he invokes the benefits of civil harmony when he describes how 'gentlemen in England, now abed/ Shall think themselves accursed they were not here' (2.3.64-5). At Harfleur he makes it clear that it would be a far better fate to be governed by the king of England than bear the brunt of an attack on those who challenged his authority. Such sentiments could have pleased Elizabeth and shown the play as patriotic.

Further contextual evidence suggests the dramatist's expertise in manipulating history to serve the purpose of ambiguous and opaque reference to contemporary events. As Juliet Barker notes by citing historical accounts of Harfleur, at the end of the siege Henry demanded of Raoul de Gaucourt that he take a letter to the Dauphin challenging him to a duel and reminding him that 'the result of our wars is the death of men, the destruction of countryside, the lamentations of women and children, and so many evils generally, that every good Christian ought to grieve for it

and take compassion.’⁷⁰ This suggests a simultaneous combination of threat and personal bravery. Henry’s attitude in the play is thus in-keeping with historical fact to some extent. It may be an astute manipulation of the facts by the dramatist as suggested by Dollimore and Sinfield. In terms of dramatic structure Henry’s suggestion of retributive brutality, especially against women and children, also shapes audience response to his subsequent wooing scene with the French princess in which the prospect of childbearing is repeatedly referred to by the king who explicitly speaks to her as a ‘plain soldier’ (5.3.141-2). If this evidence is considered, the scene between Katherine and Alice that follows Harfleur becomes less acceptable as a comic interlude.

At the Courtyard Theatre the siege of Harfleur was enhanced by the use of the stage and auditorium and Henry’s final ‘parole’ (3.2.4) was integrated along with his men into the action. Whereas Hytner had separated the monarch from his companions to some extent by highlighting the king’s entrances at the Olivier, Boyd’s Henry was more physically involved in the siege, emerging from its chaos. The English erupted from under the stage at the Courtyard Theatre to simulate the tunnels dug around the battlements in a stage picture reminiscent of Branagh’s film. Whilst Llewellyn, Jamie and Macmorris controlled the horizontal plane of the stage, Henry delivered his final speech after making an assault on the central tower structure by swinging onto it with ropes, using the vertical space. In this way he could access the attention of the audience in the galleries. His physical prowess contrasted with the Eastcheap characters, showing him to be the more agile character. In one sense it was spectacular but in another Henry was in truth a

⁷⁰ Juliet Barker, *Agincourt: The King, The Campaign, The Battle* (St Ives: Abacus, 2006), p. 208.

diminutive figure, launching himself onto the round iron structure that also symbolised the knight's helmet and only resting there briefly before being joined by the rest of his army.

The intensity of the bombardment was fully realised on the stage, including the use of a bomb tank for explosion effects, producing a shell-shocked aftermath in the whole auditorium. In this situation, with the experience of the effort involved, the content of Henry's speech reflected the immediate heat of the battle and its accompanying teamwork rather than his status as leader. He turned upstage to address the Governor, before turning to face the audience in the auditorium for the latter parts of his speech. As the gates of the iron tower opened to admit the English, Henry moved downstage through the auditorium, to stay elsewhere in the town for the night away from dysentery and disease, showing little interest in Harfleur and apparently focused on the next phase of action. His exit was spectacularly eclipsed by the French as Katherine was flown in upstage, standing inside an empty picture frame; a feature that reminded the audience of the pictorial devices used by Olivier in his film but appropriated here for a very different effect. Stepping delicately out onto the stage that had just witnessed Harfleur became a poignant moment reminding the audience of what had been just been ravaged by the English. Katherine's singing in French, enhanced by an echo, became an eerie lament for the war-torn town.

Act 5 Scene 1. Henry as a 'plain soldier' (5.1.41-2).

As is the case elsewhere in the play the dramatisation of Henry's private rather than public moments remain the most telling about the inconsistencies in his character. This is demonstrated in his wooing of Katherine in the final act when the court is dismissed and he is left alone with the Princess and the audience, attempting to

charm both. The context of original production would have made this scene difficult to write and play although it would add tension. Depicting a royal betrothal when the Queen was both unmarried and unlikely to bear children would highlight the lack of alliance and heir. The fate of Elizabeth's mother Anne Boleyn reflected the mortal dangers of becoming a royal bride. Henry as an historical character needed to emerge successfully from both the battle and the betrothal, but the prospect of a French queen would be problematic to stage since Mary, who had French allies, had been executed by Elizabeth as recently as 1587. In a modern context, Tony Blair's wooing of the French in order to gain a UN resolution to facilitate his plans to go to war in Iraq were destined to end in failure. Dominique de Villepin's statement to the UNSC in New York on Valentine's Day 2003 firmly rejected the move to war in favour of negotiation. He told the assembly: 'In this temple of the United Nations, we are the guardians of an ideal, the guardians of a conscience. The onerous responsibility and immense honor we have must lead us to give priority to disarmament in peace.'⁷¹ He therefore implied that Blair's plans for war did not reflect a clear conscience.

According to Lance Wilcox 'Shakespeare did not create in Katherine a character of great profundity or power. She is an attractive girl, but her appeal is entirely and somewhat simplemindedly aesthetic, as opposed to moral or intellectual.'⁷² This ignores her royal status and her dramatic purpose of interacting with Henry in a political and personal capacity. As a potential partner she has the ability to remind Henry of his moral duty and the repercussions of his actions as king. Shakespeare had recently developed darkly comic role models in his

⁷¹ Dominique de Villepin, 'Statement to the United Nations Security Council', 14 February 2003 < http://www.foreignpolicy.org.tr/documents/villepin_140203_p.htm > [accessed 5 April 2012] (para. 45 of 46).

⁷² Lance Wilcox, 'Katherine of France as Victim and Bride', *Shakespeare Studies* 17 (1985), 61-76 (p. 61).

characterisations of the King of Navarre and the French Princess in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Here the princess is attracted to the king but the prospect of union is interrupted by duty. In *King Henry V* attraction is once again subjugated to duty although in this history play wooing needs to result in successful marital negotiation. The immediate historical context of performance also potentially demonstrates the difficulties encountered by Shakespeare for producing the scene to Henry's total advantage. An Elizabethan audience would also be aware that Katherine's elder sister Isabel had married Richard II; a loyal if short-lived alliance that was depicted favourably by Shakespeare in *Richard II*. Henry's efforts to raise Richard's status and model himself on the former king are emphasised when he describes how Richard's bones have been 'interréd new' (4.1.269) in Westminster Abbey. The links between the royal families in England and France would be recalled, providing a context for viewing Henry's eager efforts at wooing the princess. From this perspective, far from being a victim Katherine is a desirable bride and has a potentially strong influence over Henry. He makes it clear that he wishes her to like and love him in return for making her queen.

Despite Henry's victory on the battlefield it is Katherine who will have the responsibility of accepting or rejecting him and Shakespeare gives her a position of strength early in the scene as she accompanies her father and mother on to the stage in the French court. Henry's plea that she should 'teach a soldier terms/Such as will enter at a lady's ear' (5.2.99-100) recalls her studious learning of English after Harfleur and allows Katherine's character to develop an intelligent, witty and wary edge in her responses to his advances. She rejects his attempts at poetry as incomprehensible: 'Your majesty shall mock at me. I cannot speak your England'

(5.2.103-4). Her reply is both provocative and ironic in that the lexical choice of the verb ‘mock’ recalls the original interchange between the French ambassador and Henry in Act 1 scene 2 that evoked his anger and which must have been relayed to her in France. When he professes interest in whether she likes him she deflects the attempt at intimacy, declaring that she ‘cannot tell vat is “like me”’ (5.2.107), highlighting her difference from him and, through the possibilities of inflection the line offers in performance, her suspicion that Henry’s desire will suppress her individuality.

Henry’s subsequent speeches indicate reversion to insecurity in the court setting. After the rhetoric of the battlefield his crude prose describing how he could ‘leap into a wife’ (5.2.133) may show, as Lance Wilcox suggests, that Henry is ‘deliberately disarming himself to meet the princess on her own level of fluency.’⁷³ However, his attempts to impress her by passing himself off as a humbler man given to playfulness are met with a politically pointed interrogative: ‘Is it possible dat I should love de *ennemi* of France?’ (5.2.158). Katherine reminds the audience of the political reality behind the dramatic situation and the need for true peace. Henry will be unable to reassure her enough not only because of what he has won for England but also what he has done to France. The prize of a desirable and willing royal bride could easily wither to nothing more than ‘possession’ (5.2.167). Henry’s suggestion that together they will ‘compound a boy, half French, half English, that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard’ (5.2.191-192) demolishes any hope of stability or peaceful negotiation. In fact, having brought her country to its knees, he would clearly prefer to continue indulging his passion for war. As Ewan Fernie

⁷³ Wilcox, ‘Katherine of France as Victim and Bride’, p. 70.

suggests, ‘far from casting off his fierce agency to woo a woman, Henry is inviting her to join in.’⁷⁴ She responds with an accusation of insincerity and deception: ‘Your majesty ‘ave *fausse* French enough to deceive de most *sage demoiselle* dat is en France’ (5.2.199-200), thereby casting suspicion on the way in which he presents himself and would like her to accept him: a willing, brave and ambitious bachelor king whose ultimate intentions are honourable. Parallels could easily be drawn with perception of the leader of Britain’s then current government. Michael Billington, for example, described the portrayal of Blair in *Stuff Happens*, David Hare’s documentary drama on the run-up to Iraq which was being developed whilst *Henry V* was in repertoire, thus: ‘[T]he hints of a moral crusader are there, but [...] he emerges largely as a demented egoist obsessed by his own political standing [...] There may be some truth in this, but the play would be stronger if Hare admitted that Blair may have been propelled by idealistic motives.’⁷⁵

At the Olivier, Henry’s rough wooing of Katherine explored the difficult situation in which the king found himself after instigating military aggression on dubious grounds, placing him at a disadvantage. Hytner set the scene against the backdrop of the opulent state apartments in France, temporarily vacated by the diplomats. The scene lacked intimacy and the anonymity of the interior was highlighted by thirteen empty chairs. As Hytner notes, ‘[...] none of us were persuaded of the scene’s charm. You only have to see it from Katherine’s point of view, and its charm completely evaporates.’⁷⁶ The French court had abandoned the peacemaking process with Henry but the setting depicted a sense of tradition, dignity and republicanism. Katherine’s costume was an immaculate black suit to suggest

⁷⁴ Fernie, ‘Action! *Henry V*’, p. 114.

⁷⁵ Michael Billington, ‘*Stuff Happens*’, *Guardian*, 11 September 2004, p. 7.

⁷⁶ Hytner, ‘The Director’s Cut’, p. 200.

mourning and also her membership of the negotiating team who were similarly formally dressed. No props identified her royal status - in fact no crowns were used at all in this production and the scene opened with a presidential-style address on camera by the French King. The setting mirrored real events. By November 2004, on the eve of a state visit to Britain, the French president Jacques Chirac warned: 'The US-led war in Iraq and the removal of Saddam Hussein from power have made the world a more dangerous place.'⁷⁷ The mood on the stage was subdued.

Katherine's answers to Henry's advances were marked by an overtly fearful and sometimes angry tone. Henry's protestation that 'a good heart, Kate, is the sun and the moon' (5.2.153-4) was delivered kneeling in a posture he had previously used amongst his soldiers before the final assault of Harfleur to a negative reception. The anticipated audience laugh elicited by his reassuring joke: 'I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it' (5.2.161) was cut short by her repulsed reaction, breaking away downstage when he suggested: 'When France is mine and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine' (5.2.162-3). Thereafter the audience questioned the sincerity of her capitulation when, rather than following the stage directions that demand that Henry '*Kisses her*' (5.2.248-9), she stepped unsmilingly towards him to be kissed in an act of submission. His soothing observation in the text that her lips have a 'sugar touch' (5.2.250) was cut in favour of the more dynamic and subversive 'You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate' (5.2.249), which concluded their non-committal interview together.

Boyd's interpretation of the wooing scene rejected its traditionally comic and romantic aspect and highlighted the difficulties encountered by Henry as a young

⁷⁷ Jacques Chirac, Staff and Agencies, 'Chirac: Iraq war has made world more dangerous' *Guardian*, 17 November 2004, < <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/nov/17/france.iraq> > [accessed 8 April 2012] (para. 1 of 13).

prospective bridegroom meeting the princess of an enemy for the first time. This was achieved by integrating the scene with the war and developing a sense of continuity with Agincourt. The staging of Agincourt at the Courtyard Theatre surpassed the attention given to tactical methods employed at Harfleur by leaving behind traces of the battle throughout the auditorium. Actors let down white streamers from the galleries and above to simulate the path of the infamous arrows from the archers' bows so that they criss-crossed the stage and covered the whole auditorium, leaving a trail. Coupled with the use of ladders that were erected from traps and trapezes swung in over the action on the horizontal plane of the stage, the linear perspective of the battle was intersected and disrupted, leaving a sense of debris and chaos that was left on the stage for the rest of the play, including the betrothal. For Act 5 Scene 2 the stage floor was reconstructed, with actors carrying on unmarked coffins of the dead, providing a platform for the French and English to walk over to proceed with negotiations, including Henry's dialogue with the princess. The cost of human life after conflict in Iraq that left so many dead was therefore suggested by the staging. Michael Boyd notes: 'We took a considerable risk: [...] The risk paid off. The audience roared with laughter and then felt uneasy afterwards.'⁷⁸ Left alone with Katherine and her chaperone, Henry signified a wish to speak with her on equal terms rather than as a king by handing his crown to Alice. By doing this he appropriated and developed one of Olivier's moves as sovereign in the film version when he takes off his crown and leaves it on the back of his throne. As with Hytner's production the scene was linked with the sequences that led up to it and Katherine's mistrust was emphasised by her moves away from Henry. Boyd considers that

⁷⁸ Boyd, *The Director's Cut*, p. 201.

‘Henry is an imperialist, and he has just been responsible for the massacre of fourteen thousand French.’⁷⁹ The couple did, however, present a sense of innocent youth surrounded by the magnitude of the burdens placed upon them by the state. This was partly achieved by casting actors who suggest experience and age elsewhere in the action. The princess’s parents, for example, appeared old which in turn emphasised her youth and inexperience but also her potential to continue the heritage of the family.

Conclusion.

Both of the productions discussed in this case study show how key theatrical institutions in Britain have illustrated the continuing instability of hierarchical political and social infrastructures in *King Henry V* by revisiting the text in the conditions of the recent past. To do this they have referred to the domestic and foreign policy issues at the beginning of the play and related them to particular twenty-first century political issues in order to inform their staging practices. The text of *King Henry V*, its structure, dramatisation of events and development of the king’s character during the play reveal inconsistencies about Henry that inform the reader and the audience about attitudes to him as a leader. Other characters, such as Pistol, his fellow Eastcheapers and Katherine, are strategically placed and developed throughout the plot for the specific purpose of showing the audience the problems Henry faces as king and a man, including poverty at home and ambition ill-matched by the capability, resources and attitudes of the army. The dramatic purpose of revealing Henry’s apparent disloyalty has been highlighted in literary critical

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

analysis of the Eastcheap characters and the function of Pistol as a parallel to Henry in some respects has been discussed.

Appreciation of Katherine's character has undergone transformation in productions of the recent past, partially due to reflection on the detail of the text in the rehearsal space. Both of the productions discussed here offer portraits of Katherine's inner strength and show her resisting Henry's moves towards her. As the final scene of the play demonstrates, Henry's charm falters like his speech when Katherine dictates the pace of her scene with him. Playing opposite her on the stage enables the audience to see that he is still emotionally inexperienced and whilst she has a mother and father to advise her he is alone. In the context of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the public impact of the Princess of Wales's controversial comments on her husband's future role as king was considerable. In death she commanded an audience of many millions, her popularity seemingly outweighing that of the royal household who embraced her and then rejected her. Prince Charles was to make his own visit to Paris to collect her body to bring it back to Britain from France. Her funeral took place in Westminster Abbey alongside the bodies of the real Henry V and his Katherine de Valois who lie in Henry's tomb under the chantry arch in the very heart of the abbey. Both Hytner and Boyd took opportunities to develop Katherine's vulnerability but also present her as a mature and able diplomat. The setting of Hytner's production in particular facilitated this, particularly when Katherine was dressed in mourning for her wooing scene. Henry's ultimate failure in gaining Katherine's respect was a comment on the means he used to win political victory. The power of his rhetoric on the battlefield was replaced by inept diplomatic advances. The setting of the scene in dignified state apartments whose décor was in-

keeping with the more established republicanism of France intensified Henry's roughness.

The political contexts of recent performance in Britain also illuminated some of the difficulties and inconsistencies in the play which were, to some extent, addressed by production methods. The subtle inferences about the relationships between characters on the stage can be drawn out of the play more fully in these conditions. Nicholas Hytner wanted to reconfigure the audience profile at the Royal National Theatre, making production accessible to a wider, multi-cultural audience although this did not necessarily result in the audience being more integrated in the performance. The design concept, which used mediated representations of modern warfare, reflected Blair's republican attitudes and events in the wider political landscape. This had the effect of distancing the audience from the action, especially at Harfleur, showing that the portrait was less than sympathetic. The setting showed what the characters had become through their experience of bloodshed and the production challenged perception of Henry as a hero. Adrian Lester, an actor known to a wider and more culturally diverse audience was cast to blur the distinction between Britain and the United States. In doing so the production, unlike Boyd's, seemed less concerned with the achievements of British medieval history but rather more interested in questioning the government of the day by comparing the events of the play with developments in the Middle East in 2003.

Michael Boyd's staging was part of a whole cycle of Shakespeare's history plays chosen to reflect on Shakespeare's representation of British history for an international audience and also viewed the play in the context of the recent past. He used a fuller version of the text than Hytner, emphasising the effects of Pistol's

character by ensuring that references to or appearances by him were threaded throughout the performance. The production reiterated the commitment of the company to return to the texts in detail in order to inform performance. The focus of this production lay on the transition between scenes, using the vertical spaces to overlap the English and French camps. The Courtyard Theatre was a working model for the new theatre being built to accommodate modern audience tastes, some thirty years after the Olivier Theatre opened. This represented government investment in the regions for developing more inclusive spaces. The conditions of the Courtyard Theatre embrace intimacy and involvement between the actor and the audience furthest away from the stage and the thrust staging ensured that the characters were brought much further out into the whole auditorium. The reconfigured relationship challenges the existing hierarchies depicted in the plays. The design concept acknowledged these developments. Boyd's Brechtian approach of using an ensemble cast had also been informed by his work in Russia; a country that had undergone revolution and the breakdown of patriarchal monarchical political and social structures. Boyd's experience of ensemble work helped to break up the pyramidal hierarchical structures of previous recent productions, including Hytner's. Tom Piper's design for the setting highlighted the interaction between all of the characters, especially the soldiers, and enabled the audience to view Henry's character through their intimate exchanges. Boyd's previous work utilised the vertical spaces above the stage and the design developed this feature, especially for the battle scenes at Agincourt, the remnants of which provided an anti-climactic sense of loss rather than celebration of peace during the play's closing scene.

The methods used to illuminate these aspects of *King Henry V* will continue to be relevant when discussing how the disruption of hierarchical, political and social relationships was achieved in performance of selected scenes of *King Lear* in the final case study. Whilst the bitter ironies of war and peace emerge from *King Henry V* they are intensified in the later tragedy and played out more fully within the family. *King Lear*'s power structures are shattered in the first act and the play's physical and emotional landscape swiftly becomes war-torn, as Trevor Nunn's production set in a bleak revolutionary Russian landscape demonstrates. The fallibility of human beings and the frailty of the individual in the unstable political frameworks which they create and in which they exist, is clearly indicated by Henry's fierceness and Katherine's wariness. By emphasising these outcomes for the protagonists the play ceases to be pro or anti-war but much more of an observation of the struggle of the individual to shoulder the burden of the state. When these features are developed alongside the ironic elements of tragedy, the effects are both dramatic and problematic in a positive sense. Lear's emotionally charged retributive actions against his family appear out of character for a king yet are more understandable if the full extent of the characterisation of other kings, such as Henry V, is assimilated from multiple perspectives. How these problems are encountered and experienced in the theatrical spaces of the recent past and why they support Shakespeare's continuing high status in the theatrical landscape of Britain will be the subject of the final case study.

Chapter Seven.

King Lear. 'Set me where you stand.' (4.6.24)

The final case study aims to test the methodology established by comparing critical views of selected scenes from *King Lear* with the performance experience of Trevor Nunn's Brechtian interpretation for the conclusion of the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Complete Works Festival* in Stratford at the Courtyard Theatre¹ in 2007 and Dominic Dromgoole's version for the *Totus Mundus*² season at Shakespeare's Globe in 2008. By doing so the play is re-contextualized and can be examined from a range of perspectives to explore how the conditions of the theatrical landscape fostered inclusivity between the audience and the productions discussed. Produced at the end of Tony Blair's time in office and the final stages of the New Labour government, these productions reflect some of the political turmoil of the times. Particular aspects of the text in performance to be considered are a) the interdependent relationship between its epic and intimate features which is supported and developed by the double-plot structure, b) the use of misrule and disguise associated with comedy, c) the impact of much closer audience access to the emotional experience of family interaction in the context of wider political division in the play and d) the effect of the changing relationship between the actor and the spectator on how meanings emerge from indoor and outdoor performance in the staging conditions of the thrust and the round.

¹ Trevor Nunn's *King Lear* subsequently toured worldwide in repertoire with Chekhov's *The Seagull*.

² *King Lear* ran in repertoire with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Timon of Athens*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Liberty* by Glyn Maxwell (a play about the French Revolution) and *The Frontline*, by Ché Walker, billed as a dark comedy about London life.

Three scenes and their dramatic contexts provide sources of interlinking material used by practitioners to create the performance prism through which the audience view the play. Productive areas for discussion of scenes when they are played close to the audience are a) approaches to developing the character of Edmund, b) re-evaluation of Gloucester's thwarted suicide attempt at the illusory cliffs of Dover and c) analysis of Lear's final entrance carrying Cordelia's body on to the stage in order to produce a *tableau vivant*, culminating in the death of Lear. These three scenes and their dramatic contexts offer evidence of how the play's intimate and epic features are integrated to produce a range of perspectives for viewing the tragic action. David Bevington argues that *King Lear* sets up 'a dramatic tension between an idealised world of make-believe and the actual world of disappointed hopes. We are aware of artifice and convention, and yet are deeply moved by the "truth" of suffering, love, and hatred'.³ Aspects of metatheatrical staging in the recent present which stem particularly from character interaction with the audience in performance illustrate his point. Critical attitudes towards the theatricality of the play, especially in the latter part of the twentieth century, will form part of the contextual discussion in this chapter. The characters in *King Lear*, Bevington goes on to observe, 'pull us two ways at once; we regard them as types with universalised characteristics [...] – and yet we scrutinize them for psychological motivation because they seem so real and individual.'⁴ Analysis of the dramatic purpose of Edmund's characterisation in Act 1 Scene 2 demonstrates that these responses are created through the versatile relationships with the play that performance urges the spectator to establish. In this scene and the others under

³ David Bevington, 'Introduction to *King Lear*', in *Shakespeare's Tragedies*, ed. by David Bevington (New York: Pearson, 2006), pp. 1201-1207 (p. 1202).

⁴ *Ibid.*

discussion, director-led interpretations, the actor/audience contract and detailed attention to the use of the theatrical space are also key methods employed in this process. An analysis focusing on these aspects creates an opportunity to consider the interrelationship between the play's epic and intimate moments in closer detail.

In her discussion of *King Lear* at Shakespeare's Globe in 2008 Laurie Maguire proposes that the reader/audience 'cannot get from the play any comforting sense of order because it has been structured to deny us exactly that feeling.'⁵ This appraisal appeals to a postmodern audience seeking to be more closely involved in making sense of the tragic chaos as it unfolds during performance. Maguire argues that the play offers the spectator, sophisticated and deliberate disruption, commenting on how frequently it begins a political discourse and then 'interrupts it with a family conversation.'⁶ In *King Lear* the double plot which is created through the connection between the family and the state foregrounds the claustrophobic tensions of the court. These tensions erupt into violence and displacement – features which are considered in the contextual discussion of Edmund's first soliloquy in Act 1 Scene 2. A. W. von Schlegel disagrees with the opinion that the double plot is 'destructive of the unity of action.'⁷ In his view it provides 'the very combination which constitutes the sublime beauty of the work'⁸ and he argues that presenting the characters and events in the two households resulted in 'the appearance of a great commotion in the moral world: the picture becomes gigantic'.⁹ To achieve this perspective Edmund leads subversion in the Gloucester residence early in the action.

⁵ Laurie Maguire, 'Setting the Scene: *King Lear*,' recorded 24 June 2008 at Shakespeare's Globe. Shakespeare's Globe Archive, London (Audio).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ A. W. von Schlegel, '*King Lear*,' in *The Romantics on Shakespeare*, ed. by Jonathan Bate (London: Penguin, 1992), pp. 383-404 (p. 383).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

He then deploys it within the play's broader narrative structure in order to collapse the existing political and social hierarchies. By doing so he creates chaos within the Lear and Gloucester families and the wider political landscape.

Whilst an element of misrule provides disorder, other features of the play are rooted in the conventions of medieval texts with pre-determined outcomes. Laurie Maguire describes *King Lear* as 'a play of extremes [...] like earlier forms, such as mystery plays'¹⁰, and she cites *Richard III* and *Titus Andronicus* as comparative examples. These Shakespeare plays are concerned with political struggles for power and characterised by their emblematic features such as rhetoric, stage pictures or tableaux, and moral distinctions between good and evil. *King Lear*, however, complicates this view by presenting its audience with various levels of disguise or role-playing, inviting it to observe the action that takes place in the world of the play, or its *locus*, more closely in order to appreciate the processes of duping other characters. These devices of disguise serve a range of purposes in order to facilitate reflection on the play's themes that are linked with the world outside the theatre. Agnes Heller, for example, explores the significance of role-playing as an aspect of Renaissance life, relating it to the emergence of the individual in a capitalist society:

Dissimulation turned into a regular form of behaviour, and so it became more than just dissimulation or hypocrisy. Thus arose the split between people's 'real' nature and their other 'not real' nature and with it a permanent contradiction between essence and appearance.¹¹

Assuming different identities or disguises in a social and cultural environment paves the way for considering the development of characters such as Edmund or Berowne in playhouse spaces that were dedicated to presenting illusion. These characters are

¹⁰ Maguire, 'Setting the Scene: *King Lear*.'

¹¹ Agnes Heller, 'Individuality, knowledge of men, self-knowledge, autobiography', in *Renaissance Man*, trans. by Richard. E. Allen (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 197-245 (p. 208).

distinctive in that they share their different disguises with the audience. Role-playing within the play is one method for leading the audience into the playmaking process, set up for the spectator through soliloquy and aside. This kind of characterisation allows psychological depth to develop; the actor is freer to discuss motivation. It is accompanied by other features of stagecraft unique to Shakespeare which provides evidence of innovative use of the playhouse space, such as the inclusion of scenes which deliberately test the limits of illusion and the audience's willingness to accept it, one example being the fabricated cliff at Dover. In doing so the possibility of laughter in the context of tragic action increases. The use of disguise therefore helps to develop dramatic tension, highlight ironic perspectives and provide opportunities for exploring the inferences of the spoken text at different levels.

The indoor household locations of *King Lear* are also part of developing the idea of misrule for future events that take place in the play's exterior landscape. The characters move between these indoor and outdoor places, undergoing change as they do so but the environments themselves help to link the epic and intimate aspects of the text. Grigori Kozintsev argues: 'The spatial world which is *King Lear* is not just the location for the action but is the root and cause of the action itself, just as much as the answers which the daughters give their father, the king.'¹² At the start of the play, for example, Gloucester is a trusted member of Lear's court. His home is a place of hospitality to Regan and Cornwall before it is transformed into a scene of betrayal and suffering for Gloucester - the host - by his own son. The ambience of indoor scenes is imbued with reference to natural elements and exterior locations which cause and also reflect change within the characters later in the action. These

¹² Grigori Kozintsev, '“*Hamlet*” and “*King Lear*”: Stage and Film', *Proceedings of the World Shakespeare Congress Vancouver, August 1971*, ed. by Clifford Leech and J. M. R. Margeson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 194.

elements sometimes mirror the characters' traumatised emotional states for a specific dramatic purpose - examples being the '*Storm and Tempest*' (2.2.472)¹³ and the imaginary coastal path and 'cliff' (4.1.76) at Dover. The backgrounds are clearly defined in the stage directions or the spoken language of the text. They are represented as events or places of spiritual revelation or change. They are linked with the idea of misrule in that they disrupt perception and provide an antithetical atmosphere to the visual setting on the stage, thereby denying the audience a sense of security that a defined place or location could offer in normal circumstances. For example, the '*Storm and Tempest*' (2.2.472) which interrupts Lear's curse on Goneril at the point of his departure from the shelter of Gloucester's home is used in this way. On one level of association the storm complements Lear's anger but on another level his exit from the house directly into the tempest intensifies Regan's cruel inversion of strict codes of hospitality. Place names are similarly subjected to realignment in the audience's imagination. Regan's insistent interrogatives to Gloucester concerning Dover at the most aggressively disorientating moment of the play provide one example. 'Wherefore to Dover?' (3.7.51) she demands of Gloucester who is confined by his guests in his own home. After his blinding, her imperative '[L]et him smell/His way to Dover' (3.7.92-3) serves to suggest a real sense of location. However, the concrete notion of Dover is subsequently replaced by a much more symbolic landscape created by Edgar's power of illusion. Thus, the uses of these natural elements, places and landscapes create a sense of disorder and foreboding and support the inversion of perceptions about time and place. In order to show how changes in staging methods have accommodated these conditions of

¹³ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by R. A. Foakes, The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd series (London: Thomson Learning, 2003). Subsequent references are to this edition.

misrule a brief overview of how critics of the post-war period in particular have viewed the theatricality of the play is useful. This aspect of the text will therefore be contextualized in order to demonstrate what kinds of developments in production practices of the recent past have been made.

Critical views of the theatricality of the play in the post-war period.

King Lear's concerns with political friction, homelessness and human cruelty - topical features of its early performance on the feast of St Stephen at Westminster Hall in 1606 - offered pertinent themes to a mid-twentieth century audience.

Maynard Mack, writing in the 1960s, argued that the proscenium arch of the nineteenth century had 'increased the imaginative distance between spectator and action [... and that] elaboration of scenery and scene changing and stage machines impinged on the role that Shakespeare had assigned to poetry, sometimes rendering it superfluous'.¹⁴ Mack therefore articulated a connection between the physical representation of place on the stage and the dramatic value of language spoken by the actor which was to be re-examined in performance in studio conditions. As previously noted in the discussion on Buzz Goodbody's production of *King Lear* at The Other Place and Richard Eyre's *King Lear* at the Cottesloe Theatre in 1997, production practice at the end of the twentieth century sought to close the gap between the spectator and the play, removing obstacles until the audience became part of the playmaking process. During the Cold War, the changing landscape of performance was conducive to illustrating the play's 'philosophical cruelties'¹⁵ which, Jan Kott argues, 'neither the romantic, nor the naturalistic theatre was able to

¹⁴ Maynard Mack, 'Actors and Redactors (1965)', in *King Lear, Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. by Frank Kermode, rev. edn (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 49-73 (p. 63).

¹⁵ Jan Kott, '*King Lear* or Endgame' in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, trans. by Boleslaw Taborski (London: Methuen, 1964), pp. 101-137 (p. 104).

show; only the new theatre can.’¹⁶ He compares Shakespeare’s work as a dramatist favourably with:

Durrenmatt’s full-bloodedness, sharpness, lack of cohesion, and stylistic confusion; with Brecht’s epic quality; [...] with Beckett’s new *Theatrum Mundi* [...]; every one of these three kinds of drama and theatre has more similarities to Shakespeare and medieval morality plays than to nineteenth century drama.¹⁷

Spartan use of space and abstract design concepts were accompanied by acting methods that could access the ‘grotesque’¹⁸ element of drama which Kott identifies as ‘more cruel than tragedy.’¹⁹ His differentiated comparison allows for psychologically detailed and sometimes contradictory character-playing and audience response. To achieve these reactions to the text it has been necessary to adapt the practices of both absurdist and epic theatre, which often includes humour. The presentation of Edmund’s frank cynicism and the spectator’s response to him is one such example, since it evokes admiration for his ambition and also horror at his lack of conscience. The function of the grotesque as Kott defines it also suits some modern interpretations of *King Lear* in that ‘[t]he grotesque is a criticism of the absolute in the name of frail human experience. That is why tragedy brings *catharsis*, while grotesque offers no consolation whatsoever.’²⁰ In the medium of film this has been effectively achieved as the bleak versions of *King Lear* by Peter Brook and Grigori Kozintsev in the Cold War period demonstrate. As *King Lear* develops and the king goes mad there are diminishing opportunities to achieve any sense of consolation. The frailty of hope is set against the play’s nihilistic outcome, emphasised through Lear’s meeting with Cordelia on her return from France too late

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 104-5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

to save him. The play culminates not only with the king's death and that of Cordelia but also the entire Lear dynasty through murder, grief or suicide.

In terms of the play's comic aspect, John Bayley proposes that 'the post-Romantic age only recognises the idea of the tragic if it is presented in comic-grotesque form which usually excludes the possibility of real humour'.²¹ In *King Lear* a range of dark humour is evident, expressed as situational or spoken irony. It is appreciated by the audience at a different pace from the action and it is not necessarily expressed through laughter. These responses are drawn out in different ways connected with the uses of space at Shakespeare's Globe and the Courtyard Theatre. At Shakespeare's Globe the distance between the characters and the spectator allows the humour to develop, as the discussion of the first two scenes selected for analysis demonstrates, whereas at the Courtyard Theatre it is more difficult to develop a reaction of laughter to ironic moments played out on the stage, perhaps because of the proximity of the player to the audience. Attempts to forge an actor/audience contract can be detected in the way in which scenes in the text are structured. For example, John Bayley demonstrates that the text of *King Lear* provides comparatively frequent references to the natural world with 'a wide suggestion not only of lives being lived in the usual variety, but of physical continuity too'.²² This is evidenced in Act 4 Scene 6 at Dover when Edgar creates an animated but invisible dumb show of everyday life which plays with the visual perception of both the character of the blinded Gloucester and the audience who also cannot see a real location but have to imagine it, thereby distorting reality. These participants in performance work together to produce an extended and symbolic

²¹ John Bayley, 'The King's Ship', in *Shakespeare and Tragedy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 7-48 (p. 29).

²² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

fantasy. This is a much more interactive and subjective performance landscape for the audience. In this way, as Maguire reflects, *King Lear* demonstrates ‘the fallibility of human perception [and] dramatises the key theme not just of Gloucester and Lear’s misjudgement but our own misjudgement.’²³ Moreover, the more intricate processes of developing and understanding the double-plot, which helpfully distorts the audience’s perceptions about appearance and reality even further, clearly complicates the view of the action as it is presented on the stage. The next part of the chapter shows how these complications are presented to an audience through setting in productions which subvert expectation.

The Performance Landscape 2007-2008. Productions of *King Lear* at the Courtyard Theatre and Shakespeare’s Globe.

A sense of verticality on the stage at the Courtyard Theatre for Trevor Nunn’s production emphasised the noticeable absence of a spiritual dimension to the events on the stage, as demonstrated in its opening dumb show. Lear’s court entered and knelt or, in the case of the younger aristocratic males, lay prostrate as the king raised his arms to invoke the gods’ blessing for Cordelia’s forthcoming betrothal. However, the deliberately extended sequence, accompanied by intrusive piped organ music, lacked conviction. Stanley Wells’s account of Christopher Oram’s metatheatrical set suggests that its function was ‘symbolic rather than naturalistic.’²⁴ Oram used ‘a receding Victorian-style theatre balcony with scarlet plush drapes overhanging the boxes [...] As the action progressed the drapes fell to reveal crumbling walls.’²⁵ The balcony, parallel with the first gallery, provided a *trompe l’oeil* perspective along the backstage wall, drawing the gaze upwards and across to stage left and emphasising

²³ Maguire, ‘Setting the Scene: *King Lear*.’

²⁴ Stanley Wells, ‘*King Lear*’, *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, *Special Issue 2007*, 10 (2007), 88.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

the stage as a place of illusion. As in the set for Gregory Doran's *Love's Labour's Lost*, the thrust stage emerging from this crumbling proscenium arch indicated that the audience was backstage in a real theatre and that it was therefore part of the acting company and the activity on the stage; a reversal of a proscenium perspective.²⁶ Actors made entrances from upstage, through the imaginary auditorium of the stage set, often working on a diagonal. This is a favoured configuration for blocking in a thrust setting since a greater part of the audience has access to the action. The conditions of misrule which subvert expectation were therefore provided by this configuration of stage and audience. The collapsing theatre held particular meaning for a local Stratford audience that had knowledge of the recent demolition of the main house proscenium arch at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre nearby; a regional transition between two cultural styles whilst simultaneously creating a sense of insecurity for the world of the play. The costumes, 'suggestive, perhaps, of Imperial Russia',²⁷ implied revolution; the luxurious, feminine vulnerability of Cordelia's pastel evening gown and naked shoulders in Act 1 Scene 1 was overtaken by uniformed soldiers armed for war and her father dressed in rags. Superimposing a warzone on the theatre set emphasised attacks on bourgeois culture. This was carried through in represented violence against the body when the Fool was gratuitously hanged prior to the interval; graphic staging that illustrated the play's defining premeditative cruelty. Setting the play in this way invited a comparison with revolutionary change, especially when it was played in repertoire with a Russian classic, Chekhov's *The Seagull*, on its sell-out worldwide tour.

²⁶ Production photographs of the setting of *King Lear* can be viewed at < <http://www.rsc.org.uk/explore/king-lear/2007-production-photos.aspx> > [accessed 18 February 2013] (Photographic evidence).

²⁷ Wells, 'King Lear.'

By contrast, the staging of *King Lear* at Shakespeare's Globe embraced the audience more fully as prospective players and as part of the community of the play. The *Totus Mundus* season was a reference to *Totus Mundus agit historionem* (The Whole World Is A Playhouse) which, according to Dominic Dromgoole, 'is thought to have been the motto of the first Globe.'²⁸ As noted, it was played with a range of other plays from different generic platforms; tragic, subversive and comic. In the daylight conditions offered by Shakespeare's Globe it is more difficult to ignore both the artificial conditions of the playing space and the humanity collected there. The size of the stage and the effort involved in traversing its width and depth, which is both higher and larger than more intimate indoor spaces like the Courtyard Theatre, enables comparative analysis between these two productions of the interplay not only between characters but also between the actor and the spectator. This is achieved by considering character and blocking of moves on the stage, as the following discussion of Edmund's movement in relation to his function in Act 1 Scene 2 indicates. For *King Lear* a hexagonal playing area was extended downstage centre into the yard and connected with the main platform by a short bridge. This enabled action in the *locus* of the play to be brought across the traditional *platea* space of the extreme downstage area of the main stage, playing right into the well of the yard, as in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Laurie Maguire suggests that to play here on the extended thrust is more insecure for the actors and also their characters. Lear, for example, 'comes to us: he leaves the comfort of the stage and moves to the uncertainty of audiences.'²⁹ This helps to compensate for the distance the audience experiences when perceiving him as a regal and therefore remote figure. The extension in the

²⁸ Dominic Dromgoole, *King Lear* theatre programme, Shakespeare's Globe, 2008. No page reference.

²⁹ Maguire, 'Setting the Scene: *King Lear*.'

yard was often used for private or quieter scenes but it also contained a trap that was used as the entrance to the hovel where Lear's imaginary arraignment of his daughters takes place; another scene which focuses on the imagination. Costumes for the women symbolised the medieval culture of Northern Europe, as observed in portraits by artists such as Hans Memling. As the action progressed to exterior scenes Lear and Gloucester began the process of divesting themselves of their heavy courtly attire, symbolically adding to an increasing ease of movement. Other more metatheatrical features included frequent musical interludes and the use of a wind machine for the storm with the operator clearly visible in the gallery over the stage.

These two productions offered different interpretations of the play and, as comparisons of scenes will demonstrate, they drew different responses from the practitioners and the audiences. Each staging combined presentation of the broader landscape of the tragedy with attention to intimate interaction between characters, especially in the indoor confined space with a smaller number of spectators. In some respects it is impossible to separate the epic and intimate features of the tragedy as they co-exist for the purpose of making the cumulative impression that they leave on the audience. In addition, as Dennis Kennedy observes, the contracts developed between actor and audience are influenced by their spatial relationship. In smaller spaces 'the actor is not merely a walking shadow. As an undeniable presence, as a space-occupying creature, distinctly like the watcher in size, vitality and desire, the actor in a studio becomes both more human and more threatening.'³⁰ Edmund's character illustrates this relationship in that it fuses intimacy with the broader arc of the tragic action that affects every character in the play and provides the impact of

³⁰ Kennedy, *The Spectator and the Spectacle*, p. 138.

the final act. In order to create conflict he adopts multiple disguises. The audience is given knowledge of these through his private moments alone on the stage in which he addresses them and also through his interaction with other characters.

Edmund's development of intimacy in epic action: Act 1 Scene 2.

Edmund's first soliloquy in Act 1 Scene 2 is preceded by his attendance at court, enabling him to present his first disguise in the form of courtesy. The themes of appearance and reality are broached between Gloucester and Kent through a brief exchange on the topic of favour, which ironically underscores Edmund's 'whoreson' (1.1.22) status:

Kent:	I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.
Gloucester:	It did always seem so to us; but now in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most. (1.1.1-3)

The key verbs 'thought', 'seem' and 'appears' are colloquially informal, serving several functions. They deliberately deny a sense of clarity, which the audience seeks to address. They are also adumbrative in that they are used in a different context, that of illusion, later in the play by Edmund's brother Edgar in Act 4 Scene 6 at Dover. In these opening exchanges of the play, however, they provide a cloak for masking Gloucester's anxiety about his own place and the status of his sons within a kingdom that is to be divided. Edmund, who accompanies his father at this moment, is a son of Gloucester yet, since he is illegitimate, has no real place in the hierarchy of the court. His first defence is to appropriate a disguise of deference, presenting himself as a model courtier. He is circumspect in his interaction with Kent:

Edmund: My services to your Lordship.

Kent: I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edmund: Sir, I shall study deserving. (1.1.28-30)

Despite the respectful exchange, Gloucester intervenes to disrupt any hope of continuity or friendship: 'He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again' (1.1.30-31). Gloucester's relationships with others reflect Lear's kingship and the court is thus presented as a place of claustrophobic courtesy in which underlying familial cruelty is embedded.

The chamber of the court is used for political business which, like *Titus Andronicus*, descends into chaos over the distribution of power and Cordelia's betrothal before Lear vacates it with his entourage. Lear has publicly distained the truth to mask his hurt at Cordelia's muted response to his demand for her to declare love for him in return for land: 'Thy truth then be thy dower' (1.1.109). It is only in her private farewell to her sisters, both of whom are Edmund's sexual targets, that Cordelia articulates her thoughts: 'I know you what you are' (1.1.271). The tone of bitterness that reverberates after the exchanges between the women runs on beneath Edmund's opening lines without him having to imply it himself; a subtle display of the dramatist's ability to manipulate the latent anger of a situation in the *locus* and draw energy from it for the audience in subsequent action. After the daughters' exit Edmund is left in the empty chamber to deliver his first soliloquy from the very seat of political power.

Initially, Edmund's ability to step outside the plot and address the spectator are attractive features for an audience. Terence Hawkes's commentary on the scene reveals that 'in comparison with the perfunctory betrothal rituals of the court

Edmund's self-defining speech in Act 1 (when the play is still only minutes old), presents a highly persuasive justification of unencumbered carnality; of a powerful sexual energy confined by no cultural restrictions³¹ :

Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me?
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous and my shape as true
As honest madam's issue? (1.2.1-9)

For the audience, Edmund's articulate plain-speaking and confident charisma is a seductive contrast to Cordelia's inhibition and recalls Berowne's discursive wit in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Nature is the recipient of his 'services' and he mocks his use of the noun to address Kent in the opening scene by relocating it in a much more dangerous emotional environment here. Drawing an apparently visually harmonious and multi-faceted image of himself he undercuts his own similes by defining offspring from wedlock as 'honest madam's issue' (1.2.9). By doing this he debases the notion of legitimacy but also, by his egotistical association with it, his own identity. In ordinary social conditions he would fit into the court with little physical difference in bearing, dress and manners between himself and his legitimate sibling Edgar. However, in the conditions of misrule, Lear's extra-ordinary appearance at court and in particular his banishment of Cordelia show that the attributes of 'well compact' dimensions and a 'generous' mind that Edmund describes will not fit here either. Hawkes analyses the dramatic impact of his character thus: 'The slightest taste developing in us for Edmund's disarming, bear-like vigour turns into the very factor

³¹ Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 94.

that empowers his evil. The fleeting disorder that erupts brings with it the smack of another arena',³² that of blood sport or gaming. In the context of the play the outcome of Edmund's behaviour is predation and death. His courtesy is deployed in the secret courtship of both of the King's favoured daughters and duping his father into believing that his 'legitimate' (1.2.17) brother Edgar wishes to kill him. Ultimately, he is responsible for betraying Gloucester and issuing the order to kill both Cordelia and Lear.

The archive material³³ of Trevor Nunn's staging of the scene demonstrates how the blocking of moves on the stage was complemented by the playing conditions. Edmund's physical movement manifested his confidence. Philip Winchester in the role of Edmund emerged from a prostrate position in a soft pool of light. By doing this he imitated and mocked the submissive positions of the young aristocrats in the opening dumb show before rising to stand upright in a fuller lighting cover³⁴ at the start of Act 1 Scene 2. The moment illustrates the strengthening link between the architecture of the Courtyard Theatre, its players and spectators, as Gabriel Egan observes. It is 'an apse-ended, U-shaped room and the pairs of columns holding up the seating create a vertical rhythm around the room.'³⁵ The architectural structure of the Courtyard Theatre has provided ideas for the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Egan suggests that particular layout of visible support for the galleries at the new theatre in the form of columns, like those at the Courtyard

³² Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present*, p. 95.

³³ Recording of 'King Lear' performance on 5 April 2007, Shakespeare Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon, viewed 25 August 2011 (DVD).

³⁴ Philip Winchester playing Edmund in the opening soliloquy Act 1 Scene 2 of Trevor Nunn's production < <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrAYq7MuV5k> > [accessed 20 September 2013] (Video).

³⁵ Gabriel Egan, interviewed by Gavin Green, *Cahiers Élisabéthains Special Issue 2007*, 10 (2007), 105-6.

Theatre, ‘helps the auditorium feel smaller. Also, the columns form perpendicular axes in relation to the horizontal lines of the balconies and so repeat the shape of the proscenium arch, and of course they echo the verticality of the actors on the stage, who are usually standing upright.’³⁶ These conditions can help to clarify ideas about Edmund’s role which begins to reveal its function of underpinning the structure of the play when Edmund is alone with the audience and stands up from the horizontal plane of the stage. Moreover, Egan notes that in a thrust space such as the Courtyard Theatre ‘there are often things happening in the space just over the stage as well as on it so a consideration of sightlines has to take into account not just the experience of looking at the stage but also the experience of looking above it.’³⁷ At the Courtyard Theatre, as Edmund continued his soliloquy he demonstrated this idea. He challenged the gods from his standing position, eliciting support from the audience and using the appealing gesture of outstretched arms and contact with the rear of the stalls from his eye level. He then lowered the audience gaze away from his face by producing his counterfeited letter incriminating Edgar (1.2.19) from the chest pocket of his uniform, playing with the point of focus. The use of space here empowers both the actor and the audience, drawing them closer together through business. Nunn senses mockery in Edmund’s imperative: ‘Now gods, stand up for bastards!’ (1.2.22) describing it as ‘an extremely dangerous bit of comedic dramaturgy’³⁸ as ‘atheistical Edmund creating mayhem in this world, is placed in sharp contrast to the majority

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 106.

³⁸ Trevor Nunn, interviewed by Jonathan Bate and Kevin Wright, ‘The Director’s Cut: Interviews with Adrian Noble, Deborah Warner and Trevor Nunn’, in *The RSC Shakespeare, William Shakespeare: King Lear*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (London: Macmillan, 2009), pp. 181-202 (p. 191).

who genuinely beg the gods to intervene, at times almost obsessively.’³⁹ The audience gaze was raised up once again but the highest point of reference remained Edmund’s face thrown towards the gods, accompanied by a mocking laugh. In the text there is only a brief pause before attention is drawn back down by the stage direction: ‘*Enter GLOUCESTER*’ (1.2) and development of business with the letter. The focus of the audience gaze therefore is concentrated on the bodies of the actors and what they are doing rather than any other space on the stage that is referred to in the text.

The same scene at Shakespeare’s Globe showed Edmund overhearing and spying on Goneril and Regan at the end of their exchanges in Act 1 Scene 1 before moving to a more central and public position. The women exited with full knowledge of his presence, thus preserving a disdainful distance dictated by their royal status that gave him his cue for the bitterly ironic tone of his first speech. His soliloquy was aimed across the breadth of the yard and lower gallery audience and he crossed the downstage area from left to right. He became more confidential in tone at the extreme edge to signify the opening of a *platea* space for his plotting lines concerning his brother Edgar. Facing outwards he took out his letter, showing it to the audience. His gestures were comparatively larger than those observed in the indoor space, helping to support the ironic tone of his speech. The stage at Shakespeare’s Globe provided less privacy for Edmund and the daylight conditions precluded the use of lighting effects to highlight the intricacies of facial gesture. Like Aaron on his entry into the forest in *Titus Andronicus*, the purpose of engaging and entertaining the audience and encouraging witnessing of events was made clear

³⁹ *Ibid.*

through his soliloquy. Edmund is a crowd-pleaser here and the audience respond to him as a community rather than as individuals, although he elicits different responses from different sections of the auditorium. His intimacy with the yard audience has a perspectival significance for those in the upper galleries. Edmund's familiarity with spectators in the yard is observed by them, and therefore broadens out the picture for those in the upper galleries, fusing the epic and intimate aspects of the scene as the aristocratic character engages with those outside his natural environment of the court who are also part of the real world. Further analysis reveals additional detail about his relationship with 'playing' business between actor and spectator in the space. Weimann and Bruster argue that 'Edmund embraces and characteristically combines strategies of personation and those of a plotting character. In personation [...] an actor not only declines to submerge his own social self within the contours of a fictional role but, maintaining an openly displayed relation to his competence in performance, invites the audience to appreciate the very process of counterfeiting in the theatre'.⁴⁰ In this way Edmund doubles the perspective of his character by allowing it to move between the disguises he appropriates within the *locus* and also by inviting the audience to assess his competence as a player/character from the *platea*.

The main playing space on the stage at Shakespeare's Globe is too large for totally naturalistic movement. In comparison with Philip Winchester at the Courtyard Theatre, Daniel Hawkford as Edmund paced across its breadth from the right and in doing so he travelled much further, losing some sense of intimacy. He made full use of the interrogatives in the text for direct address to the audience from his character's *platea* area, rehearsing the rhetoric in 'Why bastard? Wherefore base?' (1.2.6).

⁴⁰ Weimann and Bruster, *Shakespeare and the Power of Performance*, (p. 203).

Gloucester's entrance and his cross to centre stage allowed Edmund to play both dimensions of his disguise – that of courteous son and villain – simultaneously, as the father and son worked on a diagonal in the *locus* or world of the play. This position opens up the viewing perspective for more of the audience in the thrust of the Courtyard Theatre or on a thrust stage in the round auditorium of Shakespeare's Globe. When Edmund broke to move away from Gloucester he could reveal elements of his real intention for part of the audience, thereby dividing response. This does not necessarily exclude spectators who may be relatively used to viewing television or film action in the form of over-the-shoulder shots or handheld camera movements which offer the spectator the illusion of intimacy. From this perspective, as in real life, it is possible to feel closer to the characters' interaction even if contact with the facial gesture of one participant is lost. The section of audience who have less conventional contact may watch this closer interaction anticipating compensatory intimacy with them later in the performance. This kind of activity subverts the expectation that spatial proximity offers intimacy consistently to only one section of an audience. In the playing conditions at Shakespeare's Globe it is possible to extend a sense of close contact right up to the furthest gallery since spatial proximity, as in television or film, does not necessarily imply exclusivity.

In addition, the negotiation of interpretation of interludes like these by the audience at Shakespeare's Globe sets up a particular viewing pattern early in the play that locates intimacy at the heart of epic action and frequently involves the visible audience as part of the stage picture. These devices help to prepare the spectators for viewing later events such as the scene at Dover where Gloucester is duped once again, this time by Edgar, in a far more challenging and interactive way. During Act

1 Scene 2, however, Edmund's confident attitude contrasts with Gloucester's cautious, introspective lines, which are half declarative and half imperative, and picks up the pace of the scene to deliver a sense of rising anxiety and confusion whilst the son re-assumes the mask of deference. The comic business of hiding the counterfeit letter indicting Edgar is then delivered with ironic repetitions of it being 'Nothing' (1.2.32) for effect: 'Let's see. – Come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles' (1.2.35-6). Gloucester's persistence is touching because it reaches out to an audience that is already witness to Edmund's duplicity. The intense mockery of age by youth along with the use of props such as the letter, 'put up' (1.2.28) in Edmund's doublet close to his heart, adheres to the conventions of medieval fabliaux already noted in *Love's Labour's Lost*, developing the comic potential of the scene. The structure of the interchange also has tragic resonance for Gloucester's reappearance at Dover in Act 4 Scene 6, during which his elder son Edgar also lies to his father whilst bringing him to the illusory extremity of Dover cliff and his real despair.

On the stage at Shakespeare's Globe, father and son eventually closed the spatial gap between them for Edmund's business of handing over his letter. The prompt copy notation shows Gloucester crossing 'DS onto bridge. Ed. hovers behind Glos.'⁴¹ for Gloucester's imperative: 'Let's see. Let's see' (1.2.42). Gloucester remained on the interlinking bridge and therefore on the cusp of the extension (Edmund's trap) before breaking upstage to depart, leaving Edmund alone. Weimann notes how the text demands versatility in the actor for his second soliloquy of the scene. Edmund 'almost gymnastically readies a personation for the audience from

⁴¹ Prompt Copy notation for Dominic Dromgoole's production of *King Lear*, Shakespeare's Globe Archive, London. Viewed 11 August 2011.

the comparatively free area of the *platea*⁴² in his speech, moving from his criticism of his father's naivety to rejection of planetary influence in favour of confident assertion of himself. This requires the actor to use more of his skill as entertainer in his playing of the character. Solitude on stage is a vulnerable space for an actor but also an act of courage acknowledged and much anticipated by a modern audience since it often signifies the start of more difficult character-playing techniques. It also signifies confidence or trust in the audience to continue to observe rather than interrupt. The moment also surely contains an element of the predatory aspects involved in blood-sport, including anticipatory silence. From his position at Shakespeare's Globe Edmund could then entice his next victim, Edgar, played by Tristan Gravelle, further into the public intimacy of the extension which now served as an area of entrapment. His address to the audience here, as Weimann suggests, includes references to the specific conditions and activity of the playhouse: 'Pat, he comes like the catastrophe from the old comedy. My cue is villainous melancholy' (1.2.134-5). In this context Hawksford's subsequent 'Fa, sol, la, mi' (1.2.137) became pantomimic and provided a minute sung interlude as an overt cue for Edgar to notice him. Edgar's response was to sing back, creating a response of audience laughter tinged with fear for him. Edmund's subsequent challenge was to dominate the space and displace Edgar by driving him away through capitalising on the anxious laughter. The blocking of the movement made this very clear from a visual perspective. This sequence also prefigures Edgar's own exclusion from the court and appropriation of disguise which he describes in a soliloquy that matches Edmund's in Act 2 Scene 3.

⁴² Weimann and Bruster, *Shakespeare and the Power of Performance*, p. 204.

In this way Edmund appropriates multiple disguises in his opening appearances, contributing to a perspective of subversive misrule. In doing so he includes the audience, inviting it to give attention to him in particular ways through the development of a multi-dimensional persona which he shares only with them or invites them to observe him deploying when he acts with others. By considering the development of his character from this perspective it is possible to show how the dimensions for viewing the action have multiplied and that the opportunities for intimacy are extended beyond those spectators who are closest to him. He is able to communicate on different levels with both the audience and the characters on the stage through deft manipulation of his body and actions in the space. He is so successful that in his next disguise of loyalty he convinces his elder brother to do the same in stage business connected with the conventions of tragedy. In implicating Edgar in Act 2 Scene 1, for example, Edmund stages his own sword fight with his brother, complete with self-inflicted wound and blood: 'Draw, seem to defend yourself; now quit you well' (2.1.31) Thus, he begins to secure their reversals of fortune and in doing so he provides the dramatic impetus for Edgar to appropriate his own disguise.

In comparing the Gloucester brothers, Weimann and Bruster consider Edgar's use of disguise in the play to be superlative. 'As personator, Edgar wears his costumed fictions so lightly that he can renounce the illusion of any role, including his primary one as Edgar, son to the Earl of Gloucester.'⁴³ Weimann goes on to suggest that this is achieved through close interaction between the character that the dramatist constructs and the actor playing him: 'What matters here is not cogency

⁴³ Weimann and Bruster, *Shakespeare and the Power of Performance*, p. 205.

and consistency in the representation of character but the almost inexhaustible skill and stamina of the player's counterfeiting.⁴⁴ The metatheatricity of Gloucester's journey to Dover expands the temporal and spatial dimensions of the whole play to a much larger and symbolic scale as this particular strand of the double-plot works towards a dramatic anti-climax on its illusory cliffs. However, in order to succeed in this, the intimate features of the text need to be incorporated into the bigger arc of tragic action during subsequent scenes.

Gloucester's journey beyond Dover Beach: Act 4 Scene 6.

Rather than striking flat 'the thick rotundity of the world' (3.2.7) as Lear exhorts the thunder to accomplish in the storm, a wider sense of the universe in all its detail emerges on the road leading to Dover. Tricks and illusion remain in the power of the mortals and they are used to expand the meanings of traumatic events in the tragic landscape. The device of the play-within-a-play for Lear's arraignment of Goneril and Regan in the hovel is one example of using both imagination and action to develop the audience's ability to visualise something that does not exist. This scene prepares characters and audience for a realignment of visual perspectives, culminating with Edgar's improvisation of what David Bevington describes as a 'little drama to be acted out by his father and himself'⁴⁵ at Dover. Several different methods of dramaturgy are employed creatively to achieve its impact. A range of physical and imaginative relationships are developed between the actors on the stage and between the actors and the audience.

Gloucester's pathway to the illusory cliffs is symbolic of spiritual pilgrimage but rooted in the reality of his pain and grief: a juxtaposition of metatheatricity and

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ David Bevington, *This Wide and Universal Theater: Shakespeare in Performance, Then and Now* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 164.

naturalism that helps to develop the tragic scope of events that take place there. However, the spoken text, when acted out, provides moments of intense and restorative intimacy between father and son, during which a key shift in power between them is accomplished. When Regan evicts Gloucester from his own home and gives the command to ‘thrust him out at gates’ (3.7.92) the text picks up and develops a thread of tactile imagery ranging from brutal to tender which compensates for Gloucester’s blindness and guides him on his way. Tactile gestures and references maintain a sense of human intimacy and they preserve dignity in action that becomes increasingly epic in its scope, thereby creating a sense of fragile hope. For example, loyal characters from the lower orders of the community decide to ‘follow the old Earl and get the bedlam/To lead him where he would’ (3.7.102-3), taking him ‘flax and whites of eggs/To apply to his bleeding face’ (3.7.105-6). Early in Act 4 Gloucester ruminates on his desire to meet with Edgar and begin the healing process: ‘Might I but live to see thee with my touch/I’d say I had eyes again.’ (4.1.25-6). Edgar grants him his wish without his knowledge: ‘Give me thy arm/Poor Tom shall lead thee’ (4.1.82-3), engaging the audience in positive duplicity which contrasts with Edmund’s tricking of his father earlier in the play. The combination of gesture and language between Edgar and Gloucester, however, appears to anchor the shifting perspectives of a disorientating world which paradoxically only comes into focus at the destination of a cliff that is pure illusion.

Sensory imagery is only one aspect of how time and space in relation to the world in and around the play is developed. Unaware that his son is beside him whilst the audience plainly witnesses it, Gloucester begins to distort the perspective of the Dover scene from naturalistic to symbolic. In doing so his blindness becomes an

enabling device for imagining a much bigger picture than the one depicted on the stage. He personifies Dover, endowing it with the power of sight and using images that evoke the landscape of a classical odyssey:

There is a cliff whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep:
Bring me to the very brim of it. (4.1.76-78)

Dover's associations with epic journeying are therefore introduced well before the arrival of Edgar and his father at their destination which is, in fact, nowhere. The illusory Dover space provides the setting for another disrupted ritual since it is the location of Gloucester's thwarted attempt to depart to another world.

The audience know Edgar's description of the view at Dover to be a fabrication as all it can see is a flat, bare stage. Its attention is secured because both the symbolic world of Gloucester's lines and the reality of Edgar's desire to prevent his father's death from despair begin to merge. Edgar must now cross from the dramatic action of the *locus*, where he stands with his father, and create a *platea* space within that *locus* in order to access and manipulate the audience. From this point Edgar acts as a mediator to create the illusion that Gloucester and the spectator are both experiencing the action from exactly the same position and perspective, which they obviously do not. The success of Edgar's trick is dependent on him skilfully employing his role as half character/half illusionist within his disguise as Poor Tom. Moreover, the audience has to recognise him performing in this way in order to fulfil its own role satisfactorily by producing a divided response that both accepts and rejects what is presented. In particular the majority must suppress the desire to laugh at the absurdity of what it sees. If the actor playing Edgar achieves this response to action, Gloucester's fall will then create the effect of profound

pathos for the characters within the play and pity from the audience who witness it. Both participants (actor and audience) in his fall will receive the impact simultaneously, from different perspectives but for an intense multi-dimensional experience. However, the possibility of laughter is, in David Richman's view, integral to sustaining a sense of uncertainty: 'One possible way to disorient the spectators is to make them laugh unwillingly at the blind man's plight. Such laughter can render the audience complicit in Edgar's deception of his father.'⁴⁶ In a comedy this moment would be considered as business for the most explicit purpose, like Berowne ascending the tree in *Love's Labour's Lost* to create chaos for both character and audience before it breaks with the news of death, or Henry addressing the audience temporarily as citizens of Harfleur in the gallery and troops of the British army in the yard in *King Henry V*. At moments such as these the audience must be in no doubt what is required of it. A uniform reaction is neither guaranteed nor desirable. If a few spectators break then the laughter will sound hollow and chilling, as it does when isolated laughter erupts at Gloucester's blinding, and may be a cause of other audience members silently making a moral distinction about whether laughter is a generous reaction or not.

In *King Lear* a similar dramatic moment must maintain a connection with the presentation of nothingness that resurfaces throughout the double-plot. The idea of 'nothing' (1.1.87, 2.1.36) is repeatedly set against the promise of everything that could possibly come to fruition in the future, from Cordelia's withdrawn dowry which was expected to be 'a third more opulent' (1.1.86) than her sisters, to the darker implications provided for the audience through its witness of Edmund's

⁴⁶ David Richman, 'Smelling Their Way To Dover: A Blind Director's Take on Blind Gloucester, in *Inside Shakespeare: Essays on the Blackfriars Stage*, ed. by Peter Menzer (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna Press, 2006), pp. 156-161 (p. 158).

murderous duplicity as he plots to commit not just patricide but regicide - all of which lead to hierarchical collapse. Space and time are also destined to collapse into nothingness in the last act of the play. As the gathering pace of the tragedy demands, Edgar needs to surpass his brother's use of illusion and trickery that the audience witnessed in Act 1 Scene 2. He plays with his father's imagination and by doing so creates much out of nothing.

To achieve the impression of a space and time that literally disappears Edgar establishes a fixed starting point: 'Come on, sir, here's the place. Stand still'(4.6.11). Through necessary business he creates a physical distance between himself and Gloucester and pauses before he takes control of Gloucester's imagination, and that of the audience, to lead it down the verticality of the imaginary cliff : 'How fearful/And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low' (4.6.12-13). He uses precise spatial deixis to punctuate the drop and direct the gaze gradually downwards until it comes to rest at the axis of the imaginary horizontal shore; the exact spot where Gloucester would fall. As he does so, he describes a scene of ceaseless movement that gives a lifelike dimension to the illusory perspective. John Bayley suggests that the figures Edgar describes in the text such as the samphire gatherer hanging 'half-way down' (4.6.15) the cliff :

are not part of the play, but they do not disassociate themselves from it either. If they were either in it, or self-consciously out of it, the play would not be a Shakespearean tragedy [...] All, but in various ways, disclose kinds of existence outside the preoccupations of their tragic matter. Sailors, fishermen and samphire gatherers, going about their occupation are seen with the eye of joy, the joy of seeing the gift of 'the clearest gods'. The events of tragedy are going on in what is according to its lights an equally workaday world, in which the audience are doing their bit.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Bayley, 'The King's Ship', pp. 8-9.

The spectators are integrated into the scene because they can identify with these described characters who remain outside the main action. Disbelief is suspended yet the audience is simultaneously aware that it is looking at just two men standing on a flat stage. Although the moment is epic in its symbolic intention, Edgar's language is borrowed from earlier, more private events in the world of the play that are marked by their informality in colloquial conversation. For example, Edgar's reflection on the samphire gatherer: 'Methinks he seems no bigger than his head' (4.6.16) and his observation that '[t]he fishermen that walk upon the beach/Appear like mice' (4.6.17-18) borrow the same verbs used by his father in the initial exchanges about appearance and reality between himself and Kent at the start of the play. Edgar therefore speaks Gloucester's language rather than the language of Poor Tom; another device for encouraging the old man to accept that he is on the edge of the longed-for cliff. This use of language suggests the opening of a pathway between the two men that enables a shift in power to be undertaken. Jonathan Goldberg also notes that the language of comparison for the images is deliberately reductive and linked with a sense of hierarchy: 'the birds metamorphosed into beetles or the fishermen turned into mice are diminished on the scale of being',⁴⁸ showing that 'the language which would seem (to us) solidly to locate the world slides into an abyss, an uncreating, annihilative nothingness.'⁴⁹ The audience is implicated in this process as it is being prepared to imagine or experience the vanishing point of the hierarchical structure along with Gloucester, which also happens to be at the geographical edge of feudal Britain.

⁴⁸ Jonathan Goldberg, 'Perspectives: Dover Cliff and the Conditions of Representation', in *King Lear: Contemporary Critical Essays* ed. by Kiernan Ryan (London: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 145-157 (p. 151).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

Stage blocking suggested by the language of the text creates the perspectives for viewing the stage picture but it is also set up to disrupt the potentially comic aspect of Gloucester falling. At the Courtyard Theatre, Edgar entered with Gloucester along the auditorium gangway downstage left. The prompt copy notes that Edgar picks him up and ‘carries him on his back’⁵⁰ when he describes how the terrain is ‘horrible steep’ (4.6.4). This move created a visual tableau suggesting Christian charity but also literally carried Gloucester into the space above the stage. In this way a vertical perspective for viewing the imaginary cliff was suggested but contact was also created with the upper galleries. The physical effort of taking Gloucester on his back allowed Edgar to pant as if climbing up. After setting Gloucester down Edgar prevented him from roaming with a steadying hand and then stood in front of him, facing away towards the audience. During his description of the birds that ‘[s]how scarce so gross as beetles’ (4.6.14), Edgar closed his eyes as if struggling to sustain the illusion, temporarily stepping outside his role and self-consciously acting as himself in front of the audience to imagine the scene. His delivery of the lines became slower, more lyrical and dreamlike in its effect. Both men were temporarily sightless and the blind led the blind into the vision of the cliff. Edgar convincingly stumbled as a consequence when he reopened his eyes; a naturalistic moment of imbalance that contributed to the juxtaposition of illusion and reality on the stage.

In the play text, from his description of the vertical aspect of the cliff, Edgar follows the horizontal plane of the sea from the beach until it reaches:

⁵⁰ Prompt Copy notation, *King Lear*, Shakespeare Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon, viewed 25 August 2011.

[...] yon tall anchoring barque,
Diminished to her cock, her cock a buoy
Almost too small for sight. (4.6.18-20)

In his analysis Goldberg connects the physical realisation of its detail with two different kinds of perspectives in painting: Albertian, which demands viewing from a fixed point, and anamorphic, in which the viewer must view the image from two different perspectives – one example of this being Holbein's *The Ambassadors*. In the former Goldberg considers how 'Albertian notions of the continuity between the viewer's space and the space of the painting become a prospect of madness in which the conviction of the illusion produces the annihilation of the viewer. Gloucester embraces this illusion and plunges into it [...] and his fall shows that he is the perfect audience for it.'⁵¹In the latter, 'only in the mind can the double act of seeing be reconciled.'⁵²If the spectator has been placed in the same position by Edgar, then it too becomes part of the process. Edgar, however, complicates the view by standing outside the imaginary picture whilst still in the *locus* of the play. He is responsible not only for creating the image of falling for the audience but also disrupting it when he fabricates a change of location and adopts another disguise a few lines later in the scene in order to bring his father back to the real location of the path within the play - which is yet another illusion since the stage is empty.

The application of Albertian perspective to the imaginary landscape of the cliff, the beach, the sea, and the objects and the activity representing labour there, illuminates the effect of applying structure to random natural elements in order to portend the tragic outcome of annihilation. This can be linked to social and cultural shifts in the real world outside the theatre. Henri Lefebvre, for example, considers

⁵¹ Goldberg, 'Perspectives: Dover Cliff and the Conditions of Representation', p. 152.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 151

how, as feudal hierarchies waned and the culture of the Renaissance developed, the effects on art were considerable in that:

the representation of space tended to dominate and subordinate a representational space, of religious origin, which was now reduced to symbolic figures, to images of Heaven and Hell, of the Devil and the angels and so on. Tuscan painters, architects and theorists developed a representation of space - perspective - on the basis of a social practice which was itself [...] the result of a historic change in the relationship between town and country.⁵³

His observation helps to clarify the use of indoor and outdoor settings not only in *King Lear* but also other plays, of which *Love's Labour's Lost* is one example. The spiritual experiences in the play are located outside of the court, away from its imposed social, political and cultural structures. Lefebvre goes on to connect space with classical (Greek) notions of logic and perspective, arguing that:

Representations of space are certainly abstract, but they also play a part in social and political practice: established relations between objects and people in represented space are subordinate to a logic which will sooner or later break them up because of their lack of consistency.⁵⁴

These conditions are also clearly favourable for tragic, comic and other forms of playmaking since the perspectives ultimately fall apart at the end of scenes and the whole performance as the actors depart, the play's events conclude with varying degrees of resolution and the audience regroups for its own exit. In the worlds of the plays the narrative and its characters must also eventually disappear.

In *King Lear* reference to the painterly world of inversion and its hidden symbolism in the Dover scene has relevance for the use of misrule in creating a tragic perspective in the playhouse. David Hockney's research into the use of techniques for painting perspective during the Renaissance helps to clarify the

⁵³ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.41.

possible dramaturgy of the Dover Cliff scene. Hockney shows⁵⁵ that painters inverted the real image of a sitter or setting through the use of mirrors to produce a reflected image that could be painted upside down. The fabricated visual inversions of the Dover scene that might allude to this process could be interpreted as a visual pun on space involving the whole auditorium, with the use of perspective increasing the distortion of normality. For example, the actors are, in relation to the whole playhouse, near to the ground, looking down over an imaginary cliff face. The vision of the natural world described by Edgar, with its own sense of perspective superimposed on it through the description in the text, is an inversion of where Gloucester and Edgar really are in the *locus*: the flat horizontal plane of a location on an empty stage. It is a particularly effective and inclusive method of creating illusion for the spectators in the upper gallery at Shakespeare's Globe who really are observing a vertical drop to the actors and the yard audience below. Gloucester appears much smaller than he does to the yard audience; he is put into perspective by his relationship with the upper gallery. In this way Edgar reaches the audience furthest from the action by presenting an illusion that it can identify with because of its unique viewing position. The audience become Gloucester, looking over the cliff to the world below; a world that Gloucester himself cannot see because he is blind; a trick of empowerment for an audience. Conversely, the characters on the stage are looking over a vertical drop over a non-existent edge from a flat surface in Edgar's picture – the only high open vertical space is in fact above them. The absurdity of the scene is made tangible by the dramatist's placement of objects in the imaginary landscape in relation to each other throughout Edgar's speech to create an apparently

⁵⁵ 'David Hockney's Secret Knowledge', *Omnibus*, BBC Four, broadcast 1 October, 2008
 < <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hV63JmaaE1A> > [accessed 25 December 2011] (Video).

real yet impossible view. The illusory objects form an integral part of creating the next part of Gloucester's journey in his mind, and in the mind of the audience, towards the vanishing point of the bottom of the cliff. Whichever way it is considered by the audience or the sightless Gloucester, Edgar's picture still leads to the same point of nothingness. This part of the illusion is also linked with confusion over appropriate reaction – whether the audience cries in despair or laughs at the absurdity of the situation. Both reactions are opposites or inversions of a normal emotional reaction of rational disbelief at the situation which is presented of an old man duped into believing he is about to kill himself in conditions that defy the possibility.

The shifting positions of the characters in the next part of the scene mark a key moment of transition from alienation to empathy that heightens the play's tragic impact. Gloucester changes places with Edgar at an exact spot, illustrated by the following exchange:

Gloucester: Set me where you stand.

Edgar: Give me your hand: you are now within a foot
Of th'extreme verge. For all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright. (4.6.24-7)

The language and movement between the men is intimate, naturalistic and tactile yet sets the action in the more epic context of the universe through reference to the cosmos. Standing a little away from Gloucester, Edgar leaves a pause for blocking on the caesura after 'Give me your hand' (4.6.25)⁵⁶ as Gloucester steps towards him. His attitude to Edgar at this moment is stoic, emotionally distanced and dignified, adding pathos to the scene at the moment when he has deliberately engineered

⁵⁶ Performance recording of *King Lear*, 26 April 1997, Royal National Theatre Archive, London (VHS).

empathy. Edgar has to become intimate with his father by taking his hand and becoming his eyes; a device appropriated from recognisable behaviour in the real world to show a blind man the way forward. Conversely, it is also a rite of passage in which the son takes on the father's role. In the text Gloucester is empowered once again to use the dramatic fact of his blindness to take over creating the illusion of space on the stage: 'Go thou further off/And let me hear thee going'(4.6.31-2). He therefore shares the vision-making process with the son. Edgar stays with him for a while before breaking again to stand behind him. In the Quarto version, the stage direction '*He kneels*' (4.6.34) allows Gloucester to pray to the gods but also bring him nearer the ground where '*He falls*' (4.6.41) more easily with less potential for laughter. It also enables him to address the audience in the galleries as much as the pit, since he invariably raises his arms or assumes a posture connoting worship. In this way the interpretation is at once intimate yet it also suggests the wider perspective of the scene with the two men coming together at points but remaining relatively separate.

At the Courtyard Theatre, Gloucester also broke his move from upright to prostrate by kneeling and raising his arms to the gods in prayer before falling in a continuous move that overlapped Edgar's cue: 'Gone, sir, farewell'(4.6.42). By facing upwards from his horizontal position, he offered the audience in the upper galleries a brief stage picture of the character having reached the bottom of the cliff before he went back into the illusion. The effect of the fall is that Gloucester is transformed. Gloucester cannot be the same man who is recovered at the bottom of the cliff. Edgar's disguise as the fisherman helps to cement this process. At the moment of his faked fall, according to Jan Kott, 'the stage becomes the medieval

Theatrum Mundi. A biblical parable is now enacted: the one about the rich man who became a beggar, and the blind man who recovered his inner sight when he lost his eyes.⁵⁷ The only difference between this and its medieval contexts according to Kott is that in *King Lear* 'the stage is empty throughout: there is nothing, except the cruel earth, where man goes on his journey from the cradle to the grave.'⁵⁸ However, there is also a structural purpose in Gloucester's temporary survival. Although in a pagan world there is no possibility of redemption, as a symbolic character in a tragedy which offers some references to Christian teaching, Edgar's function is to avert Gloucester's inevitable death from grief until reconciliation with his father is achieved, the time is right for Gloucester's fate to run its course, and power shifts towards his son so that Edgar can restore justice through killing his brother. Instead of departing, Gloucester falls back into the world.

The production at Shakespeare's Globe provides notable contrasts with the indoor staging of the scene that complicates this interpretation further. Edgar, played by Trystan Gravelle, directly sought the complicity of the audience in the *platea* of the downstage area much more than the indoor performance. The distance between actor and spectator in this space has an impact on whether the scene is received as comic or tragic. The bigger the gesture, the more likely it is that the actor moves further into the audience's 'reality' of standing in the yard. The possibility of two different reactions - fascination and laughter - is intensified. Gravelle made his moves as Edgar pantomimic. He looked down onto the stage for his first line describing the dizzy height of the cliff as if he really experienced it, with his father standing behind him, isolated from contact with the audience. Edgar raised his gaze

⁵⁷ Kott, '*King Lear* or Endgame', p. 118.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

to coerce another section of the audience, looking out towards the first gallery as he described the ‘choughs’ (4.6.13). The aural and tactile aspects of the poetry became sensual and dominant. Gravelle’s lyrical delivery of the text lulled the audience, suspending the pace. The width of the downstage area meant that Edgar had to go further away from Gloucester than in the indoor production on his imperative: ‘Go thou further off’ (4.6.30). Edgar lost contact with Gloucester but gained connection with the audience whilst he played his moves as separate comic business. As he bid Edgar ‘fare thee well’ (4.6.40) Gloucester fell on the bridging platform which created a cusp between the stage and the extension, bringing himself into intimate contact with the yard, and thereby containing some of the possibility of laughter. It was at this same spot earlier in the plot that Edmund had duped his father. At this moment Edgar simultaneously turned his back on the action to turn upstage, making overtly comic business of drawing out his response: ‘Fareweeeeeeeell’ (4.6.42) before leaving a naturalistic pause. Its reception was similar to the business of severing Titus’s hand in *Titus Andronicus* and the sequence included laughter which was not a notable feature of the indoor performance. When played for this effect, the audience still has to negotiate its response to Gloucester’s survival of his faked ordeal. It must, therefore, also revisit its reaction to the characters on the imaginary cliff edge; a mixture of fascination with Edgar’s tenderness for his father and derision of a blind old man. In this way the scene represents on one level what David Richman describes as ‘the difficult fusion of despair with the comedy of deprivation’⁵⁹ which provides laughter in the context of tragedy.

⁵⁹ Richman, ‘Smelling the Way to Dover: A Blind Director’s Take on Blind Gloucester’, p. 160.

The use of space in this scene at Shakespeare's Globe demonstrates how the epic and intimate dimensions of the play are interdependent for their effect. It also shows an awareness of the power of the audience to shape events for either comic or tragic reaction. If the *Totus Mundus* ideology is successful, the audience then experiences its own divided reaction as part of a group and as individuals and reflect on why it might be different. In an indoor theatre, different views do not necessarily result in such a range of responses that will, in an outdoor setting, provide a more noticeably divided reaction which incorporates laughter, although it generally appears to achieve this with less censure. The indoor presentation of this moment was much more confident in focusing on Gloucester's actual fall, which was generally accompanied by attentive silence whereas the use of comic business to divert audience attention was more noticeable at Shakespeare's Globe. The detailed analysis of these moments of the scene therefore provided interpretations and suggestions of what meanings they hold for the audience or reader and whether they are symbolic or linked with the events of the play.

Lear and Cordelia. Act 5 Scene 3.

The lives of the Lear and Gloucester families are bound together by Edmund through action and dramatic structure in the final act. Edmund gives the order for the deaths of Lear and Cordelia and, as Trevor Nunn's production made clear, his own death lingers across those of the king and his daughter. Lear's final entrance contrasts with previous action discussed in that it is a public moment of intensely private human suffering played out entirely in the *locus* of the play. The audience cannot interrupt the final stages of the tragedy, only absorb them. However, that is not to say that the audience are unable to engage in the meaning-making process through the use of

multi-dimensional perspectives. The stage directions for Lear's entrance are explicit: 'Enter LEAR with CORDELIA in his arms' (5.3). The original stage picture of King Lear with his daughters in Act 1 Scene 1 is reconfigured with a tragic perspective imprinted upon it, just as Titus's return to the city depicts a similar reversal in fortune in *Titus Andronicus*. Lear remains at the apex of the picture, carrying Cordelia, his 'joy' (1.1.83), flanked by the corpses of Goneril and Regan 'brought out' (5.3) at Albany's command to 'Produce the bodies, be they alive or dead' (5.3.230). A range of moments concerned with natural and unnatural kinds of dying and death therefore provides the rhythm of the scene. R. A. Foakes argues of Lear's entrance with Cordelia: '[A]ll that follows depends upon a measure of uncertainty, both in Lear and in the audience who may hope until the very end that Cordelia will revive.'⁶⁰ Lear's lines, however, emphatically and rationally deny the possibility: '[S]he's gone forever./I know when one is dead and when one lives;/She's dead as earth' (5.3.258-9). Foakes notes critical interpretation of the scene as a 'kind of secular pietà, an echo of the Virgin Mary holding the dead body of Christ, which suggests one way in which the image exerts its force [although] the pathos of the scene depends upon its ambiguity.'⁶¹ However, the Christian story includes resurrection and neither Cordelia nor Lear survive their ordeals or experience any meaningful redemption. Lear's lament: 'Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so/That heaven's vaults would crack: she's gone for ever (5.3.256-7)' juxtaposes the moment of loss on an epic scale with a father's grief. Albany's worthless declaration that 'we will resign/During the life of this old majesty/To him our absolute power' (5.3.297-9) rings hollow as Lear dies during the following speech. Even Kent who

⁶⁰ R. A. Foakes, notes on Act 5 Scene 3 l.254, in *King Lear*, ed. by R. A. Foakes, The Arden Edition, 3rd series (London: Thomson Learning, 2003), p. 385.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

loves the king beyond all measure, declines to revive him since the world is not a good enough place for him to live: 'O, let him pass' (5.3.213). Productions of the recent present acknowledge these aspects of the play but inferences for the audience are primarily dependent on the actors' interpretation and delivery of the text in this scene.

The presentation of the final moments of both Cordelia and Lear in performance provides little hope at the conclusion of the play and production of the scene in a more intimate staging provides the opportunity to reinforce it in the closest detail. Giving a sense of life to Cordelia by calling for a mirror or using a feather to see if she breathes recreates the warmth of a newly dead body as the vital signs gradually disappear. The text therefore creates a naturalistic illusion through the mention of objects or the natural movement of characters in a similar way that Edgar attempts to recreate a landscape at Dover beach. Similar devices are used for effect in other late tragedies such as *Othello* or Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* when the dead apparently revive, only to die once again. In *King Lear* there is no such revival and the presentation of the corpse on the battlefield of what was once Lear's kingdom is much more public, requiring the king to play the scene not only as a father but also a monarch.

As Ian McKellen⁶² observes, the Courtyard Theatre 'has the feel of an Elizabethan theatre [with ...] everything really depending on an audience really being close enough to the action to actually see it all.'⁶³ Trevor Nunn's staging supported this viewing perspective. The detail of the text and the spatial relationships between players produces the intimate aspects of the tragic dimension but it also dictates the

⁶² Ian McKellen played King Lear for Trevor Nunn in his production at the Courtyard Theatre and on tour.

⁶³ Ian McKellen, interviewed in *King Lear*, dir. Trevor Nunn (Metrodome, 2008) (DVD).

pace of how the scene is played. In this way, the difference between life and death which is complicated to discern can be observed very closely on the stage. The death of the characters is gradual. Physically, the details are small but they are shown or spoken of in the epic circumstances of the play's climax. The scene marks precise moments of tragic and real time on the stage and the ending of the play. In the text the moment of Edmund's final revelation of his order to kill the king and his daughter, which pre-empts Lear's subsequent arrival with Cordelia almost as soon as he has spoken, focuses on the brevity of time in relation to the whole arc of events which have led to chaos. The stage business dictates a rush to stop the action which is inevitably too late. At the Courtyard Theatre, all the characters remaining on the stage knelt with their arms lifted to the gods. The extended silence as the gods failed once again to answer prayers was interrupted by McKellen's howl heard at a distance off stage which continued as he entered carrying Cordelia's body, bringing the audience gaze back on to events in the world of the play as they happened.

McKellen reflects on Lear's character that 'by the end of the story I think it is pretty clear that he's lost his faith. But in losing his faith he's discovered his humanity [...] And that has nothing to do, as far as Lear's concerned by the end, with the gods.'⁶⁴ In performance he provided a sense of certainty in his declarative: '[S]he's gone for ever./I know when one is dead and when one lives;/She's dead as earth' (5.3.258-9). Implied in these lines is a sense of irreversible loss although Lear continues with the useless rituals of checking for signs of life. At the Courtyard Theatre Lear sat with Cordelia in his arms amongst his followers who no longer preserved the distance accorded to his hierarchical position. Edmund the bastard, for

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

example, died lying close to Lear and his daughters. In this respect, Nunn presented a Brechtian interpretation of the scene, viewing the death of the king in the context of other events on the stage. Lear's final imperative: 'Look on her: look, her lips,/Look there, look there!' (5.3.310-11), which immediately precedes the stage direction '*He dies*' (5.3.309), is both an utterance of human despair and an urgent call for recognition of the destructive force of tragic action. If this is an acceptable interpretation of his final moments then Edgar's concluding speech, as a character who has masterminded a vision of the impossible earlier in the play at Dover in order to preserve life, is empowering and positive. His appeal to both the audience and the actors: 'The weight of this sad time we must obey,/Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say' (5.3.322-3) invites a resolution to reject the constraints of hierarchical order depicted in the opening lines of the play which sow the seeds of the tragedy and to search for a more humane existence.

In contrast to Nunn's interpretation which brought all of the players close together on the horizontal plane of the stage, Dromgoole's production was equally concerned with staging Lear's death in the context of the wider social environment but he used the vertical spaces of the galleries and the circularity of the auditorium to achieve it. As Dromgoole observes: 'All the world drives the playhouse'⁶⁵ and the analysis of the final scene staged in the outdoor playhouse demonstrates how the audience played its role in the closing stages of *King Lear* at Shakespeare's Globe. In these conditions, the performance of Lear's final moments presents a challenge for practitioners and spectators. Attention to physical details throughout the different stages of the scene is demanded in a potentially noisy and visually unstable

⁶⁵ Dominic Dromgoole, '*Totus Mundus 2008*', in *King Lear* theatre programme, Shakespeare's Globe. No page reference.

environment whilst its epic perspective is simultaneously constructed. For example, although those in the upper galleries of this modern reconstruction of the sixteenth century playhouse are unlikely to be able to see the button on Lear's clothing as he asks for it to be undone, they will certainly observe his hand move towards his clothing and body. They will see that it is a significantly weaker gesture than the tearing at his clothes in the storm: 'Off, off you lendings: come, unbutton here' (3.4.105-6). The audience in the galleries will also, subconsciously, have absorbed many different small natural gestures made by their fellow spectators since the yard spectators have observed and reacted to the play throughout the performance in full view of those behind and above them. If this viewing perspective is considered, Lear's request for someone to 'undo this button' (5.3.308) may not seem entirely incongruous. The audience in the upper and middle galleries will also see Lear on the raised platform of the stage at the heart of the auditorium, surrounded by onlookers and they will certainly be aware of the reactions of those who are closest to Lear. The indignity of this private moment which is played out under a public gaze underlines once more the stresses placed on the individual destined to be king; he is spared nothing and forfeits basic human privileges when he takes the crown. In performance this moment creates pathos but also curiosity and develops the dramatic tension of expectation which hushes the auditorium. All of the audience will be able to see the *tableau vivant* of the father with his dead daughter.

Establishing the links between the play's text and its audience in the conditions of the outdoor playhouse as the performance draws to a close helps to clarify further dramaturgic aspects of the final scene. George R. Kernodle argues in the post-war era: 'The Renaissance saw the emergence of the great individual – not a

lone existentialist individual trying to create his own subjective values in a meaningless universe [...]. The stages of the Renaissance were platform stages, but they all had very solid three-dimensional symbols of order at the back of the open platform.’⁶⁶ This was reflected on the raised platform here with its double doors upstage, its thick columns and its ornate canopy depicting the heavens. Lear, played by David Calder, entered through the central arch of the doors. He was dressed in white and barefoot, symbolizing the substitution of royal garments which connected him with the material world for a simple, shroud-like shift of death. Seen from the dual perspectives of the setting of the scene and the whole auditorium, the Globe stage provided a frame for the presentation of both rhetorical and intimate imagery. Unusually, the scene was received in total silence by the audience.⁶⁷

As an actor, David Calder has a combination of a deep resonant voice and considerable physical presence. Breaking with the Folio directions he carried Cordelia’s dead-weight body behind him as a burden, with her arms over his shoulder, engaging her in a poignantly limp embrace. In death her inability to demonstrate the love he had demanded at the start of the play was emphasised. She was partially hidden from the audience so the focus lay on his ‘Howl, howl, howl, howl’ (5.3.255), delivered stoically and quietly spoken rather than projected. In the text he tells how he ‘killed the slave that was a-hanging thee’ (5.3.272). Bringing Cordelia on in this way with a slight movement of her hanging on him gave a sense of this recent event off stage. From here Lear swung Cordelia down to the stage floor in the caesura before ‘she’s gone forever’ (5.3.258), his tone once again emphatic

⁶⁶ George R. Kernodle, ‘The Open Stage: Elizabethan or Existentialist Stage’, in *Shakespeare Survey* 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 1-7 (p. 4).

⁶⁷ Recording of matinee performance of *King Lear*, 30 July 2008. Shakespeare’s Globe Archive, London. (VHS).

and matter-of-fact. He laid her out gradually and stood by her to demand the looking glass but no-one responded to him and so he knelt to speak to Cordelia with Kent by his side, thereby constructing an apparently private moment in the tableau. The hierarchical order was thus reversed with attention focused on the horizontal plane of the stage. Calder provided emotional texture in his speech from anger to almost singing the lament of his despair: 'I might have *saved* her' (5.3.268). In her death in the text Lear celebrates Cordelia's life to present a sense of what has been lost. Calder's repetition of her name as he took her hand was quietly spoken, like an echo of her voice, giving a sense of her character in life: 'Her voice was ever soft/Gentle and low' (5.3.269). The line recalls her difficulty in publicly speaking her love for him in the opening scene of the play. Lear stood over Cordelia in a repetition of the blocking in which Edgar stood over his father on the imaginary shore at Dover, although presented in this scene Cordelia's revival was clearly impossible. Unlike Gloucester and Edgar, no transition of power was possible and the life of the play itself began to wane.

Conclusion.

The analysis of these performances of *King Lear* reveals some of the strengths of the play's double plot structure, showing how its construction supports the development of the thematic links between the strands of the narrative. Their epic and intimate features are interdependent for the cumulative impact of some of its tragic features. The analysis of the approaches of the directors, the designers and the interpretation of the text by the actors and the audiences considers the productions in the contexts in which they were staged to show how they have been influenced by production practices of the post-war period. The selected scenes and the techniques employed to

create them are compared and contrasted to explore the detail of the interdependence of their interrelationship. These features and aspects of their dramatic structure are evident in other plays considered in the thesis.

The discussion of productions of *King Lear* also demonstrates the influence of the cultural, political and social conditions in which they were produced. These elements contribute to the meanings of the play for a particular audience at a given moment in time and parallels between some of the events outside the theatrical institutions can be drawn when the themes of the plays are considered. The New Labour decade had witnessed significant change in the royal household, beginning, with the tragic return of the body of Princess Diana from France by the armed forces and accompanied by the Prince of Wales. By 2007 Princess Margaret and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother had died. The heir to the throne had married the divorced woman he had courted whilst still married to someone else, testing existing protocol regarding the succession. The monarchy could be considered to be in a state of flux. These productions of *King Lear* were also staged in the final phase of a New Labour government that had led the country into war. This period witnessed the demise of a leader who had promised an end to social inequality and to bring democracy to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan. Blair's premature departure resulted in a futile transference of power at home that eclipsed the illusion of a more democratic Britain and his successor was hounded out of office for speaking what he felt rather than what he ought to say. Gordon Brown was relentlessly baited by the free press which masqueraded as the voice of the people for lacking Blair's charisma and for failing to deliver a more flattering persona to the media. An iconic photographic tableau depicts him as he is about to leave Downing Street for the final

time, bravely smiling in defeat, presenting himself as a father with his young sons.⁶⁸

His loyal members of staff stand behind him, overcome with emotion. The scene epitomized the fusion of family and politics not unfamiliar in Shakespearean tragedy.

The leadership of New Labour was subsequently contested by two brothers and led to divisions within the party. The two princes of the realm made their careers in the armed forces in the service of the Queen; Harry as a soldier and William as a pilot.

Within three years the West witnessed the collapse of capitalism. The productions of *King Lear* discussed in this case study echo some of those events.

⁶⁸ Martin Argles, Gordon Brown's Last Moments Inside No 10 – Exclusive Pictures , *Guardian*, 22 September 2010 < <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/gallery/2010/may/12/gordon-brown-labourleadership?picture=362535527#/?picture=362535513&index=8> > , (9 of 18) (Photograph).

Chapter Eight.

Conclusion.

This study asks: What happened to Shakespearean production in Tony Blair's egalitarian Britain? In doing so it devises a methodology integrating the critical approaches of literary and performance criticism, which are moving ever closer as academic disciplines, with the experience of performance to explore whether more detail about the dramaturgy of the texts emerges. The desire for political change which lay at the heart of Dollimore and Sinfield's appraisal of Shakespeare during the 1980s and early 1990s was to become a partial reality in 1997. It brought with it a very different economic and globalised cultural landscape in Britain, enabling Terence Hawkes to seek re-evaluations of Shakespeare's texts and Robert Weimann to develop further analysis of their processes in relation to performance. The Royal Shakespeare Company, Shakespeare's Globe and the Royal National Theatre similarly responded to the need to adapt their performance spaces and practices to create the playmakers and the playgoers of the future who would have different preferences for the ways in which performance was staged. These changing tastes were met by transferring a variety of techniques commonly used in smaller theatre spaces in the 1980s and 1990s and developing them for larger auditoria. The political and cultural conditions at the beginning of the new millennium therefore provided the possibility of performing the plays to a broader audience demographic in more inclusive environments. How far, then, were Blair's policies of more open access to the arts successful? How far is it possible to demonstrate that developments in production practice at this time adds to existing knowledge of the texts of the past

through consideration of the extrinsic and intrinsic performance conditions of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century?

As he left office in March 2007 after almost a decade in power, Tony Blair delivered a speech at Tate Modern in which he considered the ways his government had fulfilled its pledge for the arts and culture ‘to be central, an essential part of the narrative about the character of a new, different, changed Britain.’¹ Blair told his audience that New Labour had ‘developed a particular model of government working with the cultural sector that is both immensely successful and distinctively British. That model is a mixed economy. It combines public funding with private enterprise, subsidy and the box office together.’² He argued that this way of integrating the arts into the economic life of the country was desirable in that it combined creativity with subsidy, competition and enterprise. The institutional ideologies discussed here epitomize this idea and their working practices reflect political, cultural and socio-economic change. Both the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre receive public subsidy in varying degrees. The Royal National Theatre has used private investment rather than public subsidy to draw a younger audience through the cheaper ticket prices provided by its Travelex seasons, so the government could hardly claim to have facilitated this expansion but rather made it an increasing necessity through its withdrawal of some of its funding for companies in the capital. The co-existence of the subsidized providers of Shakespeare alongside Shakespeare’s Globe as a commercial enterprise, however, facilitated competition and creativity. Although the Globe project had begun in the 1970s, it was not until

¹ Tony Blair, ‘Speech at Tate Modern’
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2007/mar/06/politicsandthearts.uk1>> [accessed 6 May 2012],
(para. 1 of 56)

² *Ibid.*, (para. 17)

the late 1990s when the political and social conditions enabled it to produce the theatrical experiences it achieved, that it was able to offer a viable alternative to the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company. The practice-based research at the site of Shakespeare's Globe was to have far-reaching effects on shaping production of Shakespeare's texts elsewhere, especially in terms of how performances were staged. Bringing the actors much further into the auditorium was just one example of radical change which was appropriated, with varying degrees of success, by other main providers of Shakespearean performance. Acknowledging the power of the audience in the conditions of performance was increasingly desirable and became embedded in institutional ideologies of the new millennium in a relatively short period of time.

Whilst each of the theatre organisations discussed in these case studies had its own established ideology, its skills base was mainly a product of the broader pyramidal hierarchical structure of British theatre which remained largely unchanged; practitioners generally adhered to a celebrity casting system, working their way up through the fringe and small-scale theatre to mainstream playhouses and careers in film and television. Publicly-funded institutions were vulnerable and economically unstable, relying on the commitment of the people who worked in them. These factors added to the sense of transience in the theatre. The fact that these institutions managed to keep any archive material at all of their productions, however minimal, is indicative of their interest in working practices and their belief that they might have some meaning to impart. In reality, it is often very difficult to piece together how practitioners have fulfilled their artistic visions. Even some of the theatre spaces in which the productions discussed here were staged have either been

replaced or no longer exist. The Courtyard Theatre in which *Henry V*, *King Lear* and *Love's Labour's Lost* were performed was a temporary playing space whilst the new theatre was built at Stratford-upon-Avon. The Royal Shakespeare Theatre where *Titus Andronicus* was performed no longer exists. Similarly, the Cottesloe in its original form is being redeveloped in 2013. Some of the productions discussed here have, until relatively recently, had little archive material to research; Ninagawa's *Titus Andronicus* is one particular example. However, recent publications of the play texts by companies such as the RSC include valuable transcripts of director interviews about contemporary productions. In addition to this, website materials from each company have expanded considerably. In these respects the research conducted for this thesis has been as extensive as possible in terms of using original sources. Interviews with designers and directors on institutional policy and planning have been particularly useful for assessing how far Blair's political vision was already a matter of survival for the larger institutions. The discussion of the Cottesloe Theatre in Chapter Three considers comments from practitioners. These reflections in turn enhance the discussion of the staging of *King Lear*, especially when the verticality of the space and its uses are considered. In some respects this analysis has led to confirmation of dramaturgic purposes of the particular use of space in the larger auditoria for *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Henry V*. However, there were some exceptions to these working practices which were informed by solely British institutional practices as the new century progressed. This is evidenced by the provision of international Shakespeare performance; the *Complete Works Festival*, for example, offered 30 visiting companies the opportunity to bring their work to Stratford-upon-Avon in the regions.

Each of the institutions discussed in this thesis benefitted from a mixed economy environment in that a range of approaches to staging Shakespeare were developed for a much broader spectatorship. Michael Boyd's interest in ensemble work offered a sense of continuity and renewed interest in English history for an international audience through his presentation of *The Histories Cycle* which followed the *Complete Works Festival*. Nicholas Hytner's work in the commercial sector and film informed his large-scale productions for the Olivier stage. His *Henry V* reflected these influences through its attractive casting of new talent known to global and younger audiences through film and television. He also employed a range of media techniques familiar to this audience. According to him, the Olivier is an ideal space in which to practise inclusivity since its architecture is based on the model of the Greek amphitheatre at Epidauros. It is 'the most public'³ of the theatres at the National, 'it's the theatre where the audience is aware of itself.'⁴ He says: 'If you have stories to tell ... worlds to explore which include the audience in [them] ... which want the audience as part of the experience, as participants rather than observers, the amphitheatre is a wonderfully exciting place to be.'⁵ He also suggests that 'when the audience is a visible, tangible part of the experience ... big debate plays, big state-of- the-nation plays, big plays about society [...] they really come alive.'⁶ He includes production of Shakespeare at the Olivier Theatre in his comments and his appraisal indicates that the audience has been placed at the heart of planning and production.

³ Nicholas Hytner, 'An Overview of the Olivier Theatre', dir. by Harry Raitt, The National Theatre Channel <<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/video/olivier-theatre-overview>> [accessed 2 January 2013] (Video).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

According to Blair there was a wider political purpose in the endeavour to broaden the reach of the arts: ‘Culture in a globalised world is an important form of diplomacy.’⁷ In the new millennium, the pressing need for diplomatic links superseded the desire for economic success in some respects as terrorist activity at home and abroad began to dominate politics along with the subsequent impetus for the Arab Spring. It became less economically viable or aesthetically desirable to produce definitive versions of Shakespeare which were biased towards traditional views of British history and based on class or generic divisions. Liberating the texts from their generic conventions, as noted in the case studies, has allowed them to be reconsidered from fresh perspectives. Although the comic aspect of *King Lear*, for example, had been identified in post-war analysis it would not necessarily be foregrounded in the late 1990s, as Richard Eyre’s Cottesloe production demonstrated. When compared with *Titus Andronicus*, and played to a crowd who want to be entertained at Shakespeare’s Globe a few years later in a different artistic and cultural climate, however, the potential of its grotesque ironies emerges as one of its strengths.

The changing spatial dynamics of performance at this time also affected how the texts were interpreted by the audience. Dominic Dromgoole, as illustrated in the discussions on *Titus Andronicus*, *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *King Lear*, applied his working experiences of more integrated relationships between actors and spectators. By extending the performance space beyond the yard into the lower gallery he consciously blurred class divisions in order to develop the conditions of misrule, producing an unruly audience/actor contract which appeared to favour those in the

⁷ Blair, ‘Speech at Tate Britain’, (para. 45).

lower galleries and the yard. The effect of this on a play such as *Love's Labour's Lost* created a responsive movement within the auditorium which was simultaneously level with and underneath the actors; a configuration which invited audience identification with characters such as Costard and his immediate superiors such as Don Armado. Time was taken to develop the foolery of these characters, building the audience's confidence to interact with and challenge what it saw. In this way a pathway was prepared for Berowne to enter into an informal and subversive relationship with the onlooker. Thus instability confronted the static nature of the patterns of the text imposed by the conventions of court behaviour of the time the play was written and traditional proscenium arch spaces of the Victorian theatre. In a wider sense, *The Edges of Rome, Renaissance and Revolution* and *Totus Mundus* seasons presented Shakespeare's Globe as a democratic performance environment and a force for change. A publicly funded theatre, paid for by taxpayers with more conservative values and expectations, would not be able to take risks in the same way.

The effect of staging a tragicomic play such as *Titus Andronicus* in these conditions is perhaps most striking in that the audience became complicit in violence or the intention of violence towards other characters early on during performance. *The Edges of Rome* gave license to an audience to work at the margins of the play; sometimes it was involved in events and sometimes it was required to observe from a distance and these perspectives were established from the start of performance. *Titus Andronicus* offers symbolic, emblematic moments which are traditionally difficult for the audience to receive; the discovery of Lavinia by her uncle Marcus is one such event. However, it provides an early example of the blending of realism and

symbolism, or the fusion of intimate situations with much more epic classical connotations of tragedy within the symbolic presentation of Lavinia's freshly mutilated body to her uncle. Subsequent events which are structurally quite close to the discovery of Lavinia clearly offer the audience comparatively naturalistic and intimate domestic episodes within the heart of the Andronici family during which Titus begins to plan his revenge. He too plays with the spectators at these moments, especially when he finds that he has no more tears to shed. Similarly, by the time Edgar is leading his father to his imaginary suicide at Dover in *King Lear* - a much later play - the audience is more accepting of the symbolic, emblematic moments and artificial conditions with which it is presented. Thus it is willing to play a role in suspending disbelief whilst simultaneously being aware that it is watching a metatheatrical moment without the performance breaking down. This in turn creates the unique episodes of dramatic tension associated with live theatre which can never be repeated exactly, only rebuilt each time the performance takes place. They rely on the relationship developed with one particular audience created during a finite timespan. Coercion, for the purpose of playing together, is part of that process.

The use of cross-media platforms for presentation of theatrical Shakespearean performance on a worldwide scale suggests that wider access to the arts was achieved not just commercially but also intellectually. It also indicates how far the idea of the participatory audience had taken hold by the end of Blair's decade in power. The partnership between performance on the stage, for example, and its simultaneous access by a broader cinema or online audience, such as that of the Donmar Warehouse's fine production of *King Lear* streamed live via the Royal National Theatre in 2011, would be a rich potential area for investigation, especially

from the point of view of the choices that theatre directors make in terms of editing and camera angles during performance to give an audience contact with its sense of liveness. In particular, the study of the impact of the soliloquy and aside in such conditions would be of interest since these are the moments in which the actor/audience contract is so intensively manipulated in live performance. In Grandage's production it is possible to show how the relationship between the main house and the smaller auditorium has strengthened. Live streaming has given it a far larger audience than it would ever have encountered in its performance space; with its stellar cast and with the attention to textual detail that this production offered it was capable of supporting such an audience. However, its compelling qualities would not necessarily survive a transition to DVD for a different kind of mass market. The situations in which these mediated performances are encountered, whether in other theatres or cinemas, suggest that the performance experience is essentially one of intimacy and that contact between spectator and performer needs certain conditions in which to maintain its power. DVD recordings of live performance such as that of *Love's Labour's Lost* at Shakespeare's Globe for a commercial market have a different kind of appeal. They are more readily available for consumption and research. These kinds of productions, formerly rarely viewed artefacts in theatre archives, include audience involvement and reaction as part of the entertainment. They show a sustained interest not only in the experience of live performance (especially of the classics) but also the presence and involvement of the spectator; audiences have become part of the product.

Advances in worldwide accessibility, not just in terms of touring but also development of performance on other media platforms are to some extent the result

of changing political, social, cultural and economic conditions at a particular time and, as this study makes clear, began to evolve during the period under discussion. Some of these changes were rooted in more democratic ideologies and practices within institutions which focused on the actor/audience contract. The *Complete Works Festival* and *The Histories Cycle*, produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company were both projects originated by Michael Boyd, whose professional life included ensemble work in Russia and the small-scale Tron Theatre in Glasgow. These were seasons with more traditional connotations for a prospective international audience. That is not to say, however, that Boyd's ensemble approach was less dynamic in creating equally multi-dimensional experiences, as his staging of *Henry V* with a relatively young and unknown actor in the title role illustrates. *The Histories* were acclaimed in the critical press as 'a thrilling mix of steely realpolitik and warring ideologies'⁸ which suggests Boyd's attempt to make the plays politically topical was successful. At the end of his tenure at the Royal Shakespeare Company, he credits the theatre as having a changed audience demographic, although not as much as the Royal National Theatre. According to Andrew Dickson in his interview with Boyd: 'Though the RSC's work is changing, not least because of its pioneering education work ("in some ways", Boyd suggests, "that's our avant-garde"), it is still older and less diverse than its closest rival, the National.'⁹ Nevertheless, Dickson suggests that 'the *World Shakespeare* festival and the 2006 *Complete Works* festival were – among much else – attempts not merely to expand the RSC's own horizons, but those of its audiences.'¹⁰ These observations, along with those of Nicholas

⁸ Andrew Dickson, 'A Life in Theatre. Michael Boyd: "I think we've produced more than our fair share of art."', *Saturday Guardian, Review*, 17 November 2012, p. 13.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Hytner on the Olivier space, suggest that the theatre-going audience in Britain has become generally more diverse and actively participates in production. It is also possible to infer that the focus of much artistic policy and institutional practice has shifted towards expansion not only of audience attendance and diversification but also its expectations.

Work on the liminality of the text and the theatrical space is a notable feature of explorative staging at Shakespeare's Globe and the Royal Shakespeare Company and has also been a prominent aspect of literary and theatrical analysis. Performance analysis of each of the productions considered in the case studies has expanded Weimann's argument about the processes whereby characters develop perspectival depth and underpin the structures of the plays by approaching the audience across the thresholds of the world of the play and playing with the audience. Dramatic tension as a result of working at the margins, whether it is created through graphic violence or through approaches to sections of the audience to work within the dramatic action as culpable witnesses, induces horror or laughter, as the discussions of *Titus Andronicus* and *King Lear* at Shakespeare's Globe indicate. Different techniques are devised to evoke these situations and responses. Weimann has provided further analysis on the uses of role-playing, disguise and personation in developing his discussions on *locus* and *platea*. The analysis of three characters in this study – Berowne, Edmund and Edgar – has contributed to the discussion on how these methods are deployed in outdoor and indoor conditions in performance. How these characters link the spoken word with movement as indicated in the textual detail highlights, and also creates a connection with, the broader themes of the plays. This approach to the plays encourages a return to the structural details in other areas of the

text, in order to trace how these details are developed over time and to re-evaluate them to discover new meanings. In doing so, the need to cross-refer to detail in other scenes in order to pick up the structural threads which may have been overlooked in other kinds of literary or theatrical analysis because they do not serve a particular thematic or generic function serves an analytical purpose. The dramatic and textual journeys of Gloucester, Edgar and Edmund towards the battlefield at Dover, for example, draw together a cohesive narrative strand which is begun in the opening exchanges of the play by Edmund in his appropriation of apparent deference to his father Gloucester and Kent. This process is barely perceptible to the reader until it is linked with the impact of other scenes and the development of character, as the combined analysis of direct address by the characters of Edmund and Edgar in *King Lear* shows. It is only when the language of speeches and also the momentum within individual scenes, not only in *King Lear* but also *Titus Andronicus*, is compared that possible patterns or links can be tentatively established. A further example is the development of Katherine as a character in *King Henry V*. Once the audience is freed from perceiving her persona and the language she uses as inconsequential or comic, this study shows that she makes a significant contribution to revealing the darker side of Henry's character.

The research on Berowne in *Love's Labour's Lost* illuminates and contributes to the discussion of the dramatic structure and processes of Edmund's character in *King Lear*. Berowne's bitterness is linked ultimately with passive acceptance of his status. Edmund is prepared to die rather than remain where society has left him and the later tragedy allows him to achieve this. Edmund's asides and disguises allow him to map out the play's premeditated events with ruthless precision, increasingly

involving the audience as he disparages fate, the power of the gods and hamartia; the traditional classical causes of tragic action. Audiences are required to actively re-evaluate the causes of Lear's downfall when his character is considered in the light of Edmund's work on the stage. In recent productions Edmund carries more of the responsibility for presenting the nihilism of the text. Encouraging the audience to act as witness to events, a technique highlighted in the discussion of performance of *Titus Andronicus*, is a device developed in *King Lear* through the much subtler means of Edmund's different kinds of role-play which are linked with the real duplicitous behaviour of the Jacobean court. This kind of investigation, often using moments or fragments of scenes, enables research into how the text works in performance for its cumulative effect. The analysis of Edmund's dealings with his father and Edgar show the effect of the practical application of these techniques in performance.

Similarly, analysis of the actors' dialogue with the audience in performance of *Love's Labour's Lost* provides comparative detail about the multi-perspectival dimensions of the stage picture which are also linked with themes in the play, as Doran's production indicates. As much as the vertical spaces above the stage are used to increase the characters' ability to slip in and out of roles, they are also used to provide changing viewpoints for the spectators throughout the auditorium, thereby layering and pacing response. The discussion of Berowne ascending the tree at the Courtyard Theatre in Chapter Five shows the dramatic effect of standing apart from or resting outside the action in a vertical space that attracts the attention of the spectators in the galleries. Not only does the audience have the opportunity of temporarily enjoying Berowne as another onlooker, although some members of the

audience would still possess higher status than him, his position makes a thematic point about the problem of hierarchical structures; he must eventually descend back into the play, which in this scene happens to be a rehearsed performance of different kinds of written texts. In presenting these episodes which refer to poor role-playing and stand apart from the strict limitations of courtly behaviour, the aristocrats on the horizontal plane of the stage in the world of the play are temporarily humanized and this is reinforced in the playful atmosphere of their inept sonneteering and oath-reading. They struggle to write and even order their thoughts since they have no true skill with words, apart from the outsider Berowne. The thematic dimensions of the scene therefore multiply very productively.

Whilst *King Lear* and *King Henry V* are often produced they have been confined to some extent by their popularity. The return to more open staging practices and Brechtian models of production, as documented by the Presentist literary analysis which informs this research, has released the potential of characters such as Pistol. As discussed, the narrative of *King Henry V* is punctuated by the Eastcheap characters and Katherine, whose responsibilities for providing a more balanced view of the king and the world he rules are increased through the use of ensemble casts. On a thrust stage they are no further or closer than other characters of higher status; each character comes under equal scrutiny. As Henry drifted onto the stage to begin his move to Southampton at the Courtyard Theatre he could listen with the audience to comments about his leadership and his character became more human, more like us. Boyd and Hytner differed in their interpretations in this respect, partly due to the architecture of the space; the Olivier stage does not extend fully into the auditorium, although its downstage threshold was sometimes used for effect.

Hytner's use of media, however, developed other means of accessing a large audience. He created modern kinds of metatheatrical tableaux or frames for viewing Henry's character with skepticism as he progressed through Eastcheap, with its plasma television screen, into the warzones of Harfleur and Agincourt accompanied by their attendant press conferences. In addition, to present characters such as Pistol or the Boy alongside Henry brings the king's character much closer to the audience. Even as a victor, he still faces the challenge of behaving humanely to Katherine in order to win her respect; a role which he fails to fulfill to the satisfaction of the princess, or the audience, as demonstrated by Hytner's *Henry V*.

Investigation of architectural and ideological developments in this thesis provides information about the developing demands of new audiences and how the institutions have responded to them. Colin Chambers argued during the 1980s that fuller access to the plays in performance in the theatre was inhibited by architectural and cultural division:

The social base for the 'fringe' was, generally speaking, higher educated, middle- class youth. Fed up with a hollow consumer society that paraded its false values everywhere, but unable to find any other society that inspired them, the 'existential', LSD, LP generation wanted to overcome its alienation by making contact and by testing the truth for itself, as close as the television screen, as immediate, as disposable – but it had to be real. Truth was important, size was not. The universal, transcendental art of the affluent proscenium theatres had to be rejected like the class interests they serviced.¹¹

These kinds of audiences were no respecters of the established boundaries offered by darkened auditoria. They demanded to be noticed and engaged but they were living in an artistically alienated world. It is perhaps no coincidence that one of the greatest tragedies, *King Lear*, was staged in the smallest theatre of the Royal National Theatre complex. The attempt to break with audience passivity is exemplified in the

¹¹ Chambers, *Other Spaces*, p. 9.

discussion of productions from the 1970s such as *Macbeth* or *King Lear* at The Other Place to those in smaller theatres such as the Cottesloe in the 1990s. Richard Eyre's *King Lear* was a mainstream response to the increasingly successful staging practices in small-scale theatres such as the Almeida; a flourishing feature of the entrepreneurial, small-business economy of the Thatcherite theatrical landscape. Setting the play in traverse conditions at the Cottesloe exemplified the reconfigured relationship between the actor and the spectator even though it seems passive when compared with what was to come in outdoor productions in the round at Shakespeare's Globe. Looking across the stage to the sea of faces opposite the traverse provided the play's human backdrop at the Cottesloe. This view of humanity was reminiscent of the King's audience gathered to watch the division of the kingdom at the beginning of Peter Brook's 1970s film of *King Lear*. This film, which itself was been groundbreaking at the time, used the camera in a metatheatrical way to develop the epic arc of the tragedy, simultaneously producing relentlessly intimate shots of actors in close-up. The Cottesloe audience was overwhelmingly serious and skeptical, ill-prepared to respond to any sense of the comedy of the play. Less than six feet away from the actors during the performance in some parts of the auditorium, the spectators were close enough to observe the nuances of gesture and voice and be absorbed into the action. Crucially for this investigation though, intimacy did not mean that its epic perspective, presented as living tableaux in the closing moments and incorporated into the set design, was disregarded but rather that it was (literally) experienced in closer detail by its audience. The relationship between the epic and the intimate in this *King Lear* was the real source of its power in performance at the Cottesloe.

Despite its artistic success and subsequent international tour Eyre's production could only ever accommodate a proportionately small audience in the theatre in comparison with the Olivier which became a site of artistic redevelopment. In an interview by Benedict Nightingale in 2009, Hytner's reflections as Artistic Director of the Royal National Theatre up to this point in time epitomizes the production ethos of larger theatrical institutions in the political environment of New Labour. He demonstrates a commitment to contributing to the quality of cultural and social life of the country in addition to its economy. He says: 'I hope all our productions are investigative, but those that excite me most are large-scale, big, public, social plays.'¹² Little sense of the intimacy alluded to in Eyre's studio work is apparent here, perhaps because of the ever tighter financial constraints imposed by the government on London venues and the need to satisfy a different kind of audience in larger spaces. Nightingale's comments on Hytner's contribution to the changing environment of the British theatre are revealing: '[It's] another change, the toppling of the barriers between the so-called fringe and mainstream theatre, that [Hytner] calls "the biggest thing that's happened in my professional lifetime. When you think how rigorously separated they were only 20 years ago, hating each other, it's astonishing".'¹³ This would not have happened if the need for the relationship between the two did not exist.

Hytner clearly indicates that his function as an artistic director of a large theatre run by public subsidy and private sponsorship is linked in his mind to politically inclusive policies for a globalised audience for the arts: 'To understand who and what you are these days you have to put yourself into the context of other

¹² Benedict Nightingale, 'The NT – Stage or Soap Box?', *The Times*, *T2 Features*, 9 February 2009, pp. 11-12.

¹³ *Ibid.*

societies and cultures [...] To be national, or the National, you have to be international.’¹⁴ His *Henry V* was morally truthful and set in the theatre of modern warfare. Interviewed on his production he comments: ‘Henry V is both hero and war criminal, and he isn’t the first to be both [...] I was less sensitive to slurring the reputation of Henry, who can look after himself, than to the possibility of damning the soldiers who carry out his orders, and by association the soldiers who carry out orders on our behalf in Iraq’.¹⁵ In this he shows an approach which readily challenges government policy although, as with any institution, artistic choices are to some extent driven by market forces in a mixed economy. An analysis of Shakespeare performance in similar institutions in other countries would produce very different outcomes in a study of this kind because of their differing political, social and economic and artistic conditions and would facilitate a wider international comparison. Similar studies of visiting companies to Britain during this period and their experiences of working here would likewise yield a further range of informative responses.

By consciously narrowing the gap between education and the arts, Blair attempted to democratise cultural life in Britain. One crucial aspect of this was that the educative remit of the theatres, as noted in this discussion, was extended. The experience of performance was transformed from passive analysis by the critical press into audience debate in pre-show and post-show discussion. The success of the Platform Papers discussions related to productions at the Royal National Theatre¹⁶ encouraged other peripheral work on production such as Workpacks (renamed

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Hytner, ‘The Director’s Cut’, in *The RSC Shakespeare, William Shakespeare: Henry V*, p. 194.

¹⁶ *Platform Papers* can be accessed on-line at < <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/discover-more/platforms/platform-papers> > [accessed 6 August 2013].

Resource Packs)¹⁷ for classroom approaches to the text and online teaching resources. The Royal Shakespeare Company matched the Royal National Theatre's Stagework¹⁸ and Shakespeare's Globe's Education websites in creating media platforms¹⁹ dedicated to the plays performed in seasons, often using filmed inserts from rehearsals. Both Boyd's and Hytner's *Henry V* were treated in this way. Practitioners could explain their production process in more detail and discuss them in relation to the texts. The desire to reveal new details of the texts and how they work for the modern practitioner is implied in these ventures, which is supported by demand for them. The overall approach has been one of inclusivity and the ideal space for this is online communication in which the individual user of the technology has the power to navigate round an area of interest.

Performances of Shakespeare which have been produced to maximize their potential to create spectacular effects which engage the whole audience or targeted sections of it provide information about the spatial relationship between the epic and intimate aspects of the texts and their dramatic structures. These in turn are linked with the ways in which the horizontal and vertical planes of the different stages and the auditoria complement each other during performance. These areas have been exploited more fully in larger spaces with bigger audiences, as the discussion of the Dover Beach scene in *King Lear* at Shakespeare's Globe indicates. Whilst *Titus Andronicus* has been rejected on grounds of taste and lack of structural cohesion, the

¹⁷ Resource Packs can be accessed on-line at <<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/discover-more/digital-classroom/resource-packs>> [accessed 6 August 2013].

¹⁸ Stagework can be accessed on-line at <<http://www.stagework.org.uk/stageworks/index.html>> [accessed 6 August 2013].

¹⁹ The Royal Shakespeare Company's Education website is accessible on-line at <<http://www.rsc.org.uk/education/>> [accessed 6 August 2013]. Shakespeare's Globe's Education website is accessible on-line at <<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/education>> [accessed 6 August 2013].

deliberate unpredictability of Lucy Bailey's production at Shakespeare's Globe under Dromgoole's new regime proved to be an inspired choice. Visceral and ruthless, it graphically depicted the possible outcomes of democratic government through its appeal to the baser instincts of the audience. In addition, paying attention to the detail of the stage directions in the texts helped practitioners make dramatically effective use of the vertical spaces of the auditoria, especially at Shakespeare's Globe, The Royal Shakespeare Theatre and the Courtyard Theatre. The epic sweep of a hierarchical collapse could be fully staged in performance when the stage pictures provided metaphorical backdrops, as Ninagawa's interpretation of *Titus Andronicus*, Dromgoole's and Doran's staging of the tree scene in *Love's Labour's Lost* or Michael Boyd's trapeze-laden *Henry V* have demonstrated.

It is not until these aspects are compared with a later play such as *King Lear* that some of the patterns linking the action of the state and the attitudes and behaviours of its private citizens can be explored to show the oppressive nature of patriarchal systems of power. Trevor Nunn's collapsing theatre set which placed the audience backstage was only one part of the metaphorical journey it was asked to undertake during performances which evoked the decline of imperial Russia. Edmund's rise from his prostrate position to upstanding for his first soliloquy compares with the rise of Lavinia in Ninagawa's forest floor into the arms of her uncle which begins the process of healing emotional and physical wounds, albeit for tragic effect in both cases. Both moments in their different ways show a belief in the power of the individual to change the course of events; a belief that must surely exist in the minds of at least some of the audience who attend the play already knowing its themes and discussion points. The staging of the events at Dover in *King Lear* at

Shakespeare's Globe, which drew the upper gallery into its powerful illusory trick, is not only a most unusual example of accessing and empowering the audience furthest from the stage by giving it a unique view of events but also a physical representation of the illusion presented to Gloucester in the spoken language of the text. In architectural conditions which make use of these vertical sightlines a balance is struck, therefore, between examining the attitudes of those in power and the effect on those who receive the full reinforcement of their values. The outcomes of these staged narratives about ancient pagan and feudal civilizations on which modern democracy was built, such as *Titus Andronicus*, *King Henry V* and *King Lear*, were undoubtedly less welcome to a New Labour government which wanted to concentrate on presenting the great benefits of an apparently free world to its citizens. The effect of events in the recent past, however, as these plays show, cannot be denied.

The methodology employed here is one way of continuing to develop and test the work of Hawkes, Weimann and theatre practitioners in the ever-changing conditions of theatrical performance. Whilst the written texts remain the same, the conditions in which they are received and analysed remain usefully unstable. Audience surveys can only provide information basic information about spectatorship. They are generally designed to capture statistical information about audience demographics and do not generally encourage discursive comments.²⁰ Whilst it is difficult to ask a representative range of spectators in detail what drew

²⁰ One example of audience survey material consulted for this thesis showed that '250 questionnaires were mailed out to *Titus Andronicus* bookers. 100 were received back; [a] (40%) response rate.' The section on 'Thoughts and Feelings About the Production' offers two pages of brief comments. ('RSC Complete Works Audience Survey July 2006, *Titus Andronicus* Audience.' Provided by Marilyn Butler, Publicity Department, The Royal Shakespeare Company (Stratford-upon-Avon: The Royal Shakespeare Company), pp. 1-28. Unnumbered pages).

them to performances of the plays or describe what they considered their status to be, both inside and outside the playhouse, it is possible to show how they interacted with performance. Physical audience activity and response can be observed and considered in performance and in archive recordings. The evidence discovered in the research can be fruitfully compared with strands of literary and theatrical analysis that were undergoing change and development during the implementation of Blairite policies concerning the arts. Most productively, it demonstrates the value of returning to the texts themselves in detail in order to discover more about the ways in which the audience is engaged in performance.

Richard Eyre says that he goes to the theatre ‘to be illuminated.’²¹ The research conducted here shows one way in which the vital debate begun by critics such as Dollimore and Sinfield has continued in the conditions of the recent past. By doing so it has shed light on some of the processes of the plays. By limiting this study to a specific political timeframe it has been possible to trace the impact of arts policies at institutional and performance level across a range of plays and playing environments. A deepening, multi-perspectival understanding of the texts is achieved by considering the productive problems which emerge from the text in these different performance conditions and comparing these with the difficulties suggested by literary and theatrical critical accounts of them. The case studies therefore contribute to the evolving critical debate on how the processes of Shakespeare’s plays are explored by demonstrating the value of applying a multi-perspectival approach to selected performances in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

²¹ Richard Eyre, interviewed by Stephen Sackur, *Hardtalk*, BBC News Channel, 24 June 2009. No longer available online.

Appendix A.

Extract from *The Arts Council for England's National Policy for Theatre in England, July 2000*, Section 4.¹

4 Eight priorities

The National Policy for Theatre in England is built on eight key priorities. We expect all funded organisations to deliver the first two priorities. The remaining six priorities should inform the thinking of everyone involved in subsidised theatre. However, we do not expect everyone to give them equal priority or delivery. The Arts Council will be looking to the theatre sector as a whole to deliver:

1 A better range of high quality work

Together we must deliver a greater range of high quality live theatre across the country. This work must be across all scales and sectors. We acknowledge that work will be performed in very different contexts but the quality of the work is key, as is its relevance to its audience.

We will invest in artists and arts organisations that show a real commitment to creativity and innovation. Those working in theatre are actively encouraged to develop new talent and respond to new ideas and emerging artistic practice.

2 Attract more people

If we are to achieve a sustainable increase in the numbers of people engaging with theatre as audiences and as participants then theatre has to offer them an experience that is stimulating and engaging.

We expect funded theatre to have audience development at its heart. The interaction between art and audiences and participants has to be central.

The theatre community should continue to build on its work to engage with people who have felt excluded from theatre. Access must be a key priority. Young people are a particular priority. We need to grow and encourage the next generation of audiences and practitioners.

More organisations and buildings should be able to respond to the way people live their lives now, offering an environment that is as attractive as other leisure-related buildings. Theatre buildings need to be clear about their focus and their identity. Where appropriate, they should make people of all ages, social groups and ethnic communities feel at home in them throughout the day.

¹ *The Arts Council for England's National Policy for Theatre in England, July 2000*, Section 4 <<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/300.pdf>> [accessed 9 August 2013], pp. 1-7 (pp. 4-6).

3 Develop new ways of working

We will invest in organisations that foster a culture of innovation. We want to see greater collaborative partnerships between different theatre organisations and less territorialism within the theatre community.

Practitioners must embrace a culture of innovation and a wider range of forms and traditions. Theatre needs to engage with a wider range of artists and other partners. Theatre should also connect more proactively with the other creative industries, seeing them as an opportunity not a threat.

We will support theatre initiatives that make imaginative use of existing and new environments. We would like to see work made for a greater range of spaces and places.

The Arts Council will do its part to create stronger links between producing venues, presenting houses, and touring companies to enable greater exploitation of good work and to enable circuits of promoters to receive a more flexible and varied range of theatre.

4 Education

We expect most forms of funded theatre to place education at the heart of their work. Involving young people in theatre is key.

The Arts Council recognises the importance of working with the education sector: with schools, colleges and higher education. We will work with the education sector to influence the role of drama in the curriculum, seeking to maximise teachers' appreciation of the value of theatre as an educational resource and to fund more theatre in educational contexts.

5 Address diversity and inclusion

Theatre must engage with audiences and artists from a broader, more diverse range of backgrounds. It must connect with people who have been excluded, including those living in rural communities.

We expect the theatre community to develop work that speaks to the diverse audiences who make up this country today. This work is a priority for us. We want to see an increase in the workforce from the non-white population; a greater percentage of the audience for all theatre coming from a wider range of backgrounds; and a much more diverse artistic programme across England.

6 Develop the artists and creative managers of the future

Theatre must give talented people flexible and appropriate career opportunities. It must create conditions that ensure talent is nurtured. It must improve the working environment, sustaining creative teams and providing better pay and conditions for artists, technicians and managers.

It must embrace the culture of lifelong learning, ensuring that individuals working in theatre are skilled and motivated.

We must acknowledge and exploit the synergies between the subsidised and commercial sectors and between London and the regions. In particular we must work with other key partners to make it more possible for talented people to work outside London. The Arts Council will support the profession in making the changes necessary for this to happen.

7 An international reputation

We expect the theatre community as a whole to develop work of international quality and bring the best world theatre to England. We will encourage more international collaborations and projects that enhance the international reputation of English theatre.

8 Regional distinctiveness

We will also encourage the unique local voice of theatre that combines quality with the edge that comes from making work in, and for, a particular community. Theatre companies and agencies should provide a meaningful contribution to the life of the community in which they exist.

Appendix B.

Further notes on educational changes prior to and subsequent to the period 1997-2008.

Key Stage 3.

In 2007 the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3 required ‘At least one play by Shakespeare: the study should be based on whole texts and provide experience of the play in performance e.g through drama techniques, acting out key scenes, watching a theatre performance.’¹

Key Stage 4.

At Key Stage 4 the requirement for study was: ‘At least one play by Shakespeare:[....] Students develop their interpretive and analytical skills through seeing the play in terms of its social and historical context and significance.’²

Higher Education.

In higher education, the *Report of the National Committee* (the Dearing Report), commissioned by the Conservative government for the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education and published in July 1997³, began the process of consultation that ultimately led to the introduction of student tuition fees. Charles Clarke’s White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education*, published on 22 January

¹ *English Programme of Study for Key Stage 3 and Attainment Targets* <<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/e/english%202007%20programme%20of%20study%20for%20key%20stage%203.pdf>> [accessed 6 August 2013], 61-81 (p. 71).

² *English Programme of Study for Key Stage 4* <<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/p/english%202007%20programme%20of%20study%20for%20key%20stage%204.pdf>> [accessed 6 August 2013], 84-99 (p. 95).

³ Ron Dearing, *Report of the National Committee*, The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education <<https://bei.leeds.ac.uk/Partners/NCIHE/>> [accessed 6 August 2013]).

2003, made further comments regarding funding which would lead to further increases in fees.⁴ Clarke was Secretary of State for Education and Skills 2002-2004.

Parliamentary Debate.

As Hansard documents, the motion for the second reading of The Higher Education Bill in the House of Commons on 24 January 2004 was contested in full.⁵ It was passed by 316 votes to 311. 71 Labour MPs voted against.

⁴ Charles Clarke, *The Future of Higher Education* <<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080205132358/dcsf.gov.uk/hegateway/strategy/hestrategy/foreword.shtml>> [accessed 6 August 2013].

⁵ Hansard, Orders of the Day, Higher Education Bill, 24 January 2004 (<<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo040127/debtext/40127-06.htm>> [accessed 6 August 2013] Volume 417, Columns 168-284.

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The layout of the bibliography reflects the way in which the methodology was developed for this thesis.

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